

## BUS WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITED

>>Pages 10&11



As a new TV series looks at the decline of the Raj, Nick Clark examines the bloody history of the British Empire in India >>Pages 14&15

## Indian Summers



# Socialist Worker

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● **Top Tory's bank colluded with bosses' tax scam**

● **Tax avoiders rush to fund the Conservatives**

● **Cameron 'backs pay rise' but cuts wages for millions**



David Cameron and former HSBC boss Lord Green

**HOW DOES privileged prime minister David Cameron have the nerve to tell company directors that "put simply—it's time Britain had a pay rise"?**

This is the man who has pushed austerity and caused the longest fall in living stand-

ards since the Victorian age.

As prime minister he has continued to freeze the pay of public sector workers year after year.

So to echo the unions' slogan calling for a rise in public sector pay is the sheerest hypocrisy.

He went on to tell the British Chambers of Commerce that "business is not a conspiracy of runaway profits, depressed wages, inequality and unfairness".

But that is exactly what it is for the majority of Britain's workers.

Our wages have fallen through both the recession and the "recovery" that Cameron is trumpeting.

The Tories don't give a damn about fairness or ordinary people. The unfolding HSBC bank scandal shows how

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### CHILD ABUSE

**Cops and cuts failed victims says new report**

MOST MEDIA coverage of the Rotherham child abuse scandal has focused on "Asian gangs", but a new report is a damning indictment of South Yorkshire Police and the local council.

Government official Louise Casey's report into Rotherham Council was published last week.

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### GREECE



**Bankers turn the screws on Greek government**

THE GREEK radical left party Syriza has declared it will fight austerity and implement measures to help ordinary people.

But the bankers and right wing politicians are trying to make Syriza compromise.

Our rulers want to prevent the spread of the idea that we can defy the rich.

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### ELECTION

**How can we build an alternative to austerity?**

THERE IS a growing debate among socialists in Britain about how to build the alternative to the cuts that the poor want and need.

And a number are beginning to break with the Labour Party to build a working class alternative.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'One of my favourite moments of the past five years was at a brick factory in Accrington'**

Prime minister **David Cameron** lies badly

**'Sneering hatred of business'**

**David Cameron** suggests that the Labour Party are against the bosses

**'Furiously, passionately, aggressively pro-business'**

Labour's **Tristram Hunt** suggests otherwise

**'Business will become much more reassured'**

**Lord Peter Mandelson** reassures the bosses about Labour leader **Ed Miliband** as he joins the election campaign

**'I will do whatever the party wants'**

**Tony Blair** joins in offering to help with the election again

**'You need venture capital to cure cancer'**

Tory London mayor **Boris Johnson** explains his vision for the health service



# Secret Tory dinner donors gain from Osborne's tax cuts

**A DOZEN** Tory donors are up to **£15 million** better off thanks to **George Osborne's** tax cuts for the wealthy.

The fat cat party funders all benefited from the top rate tax slash of 5 percent.

Senior Tories prepared to rub shoulders with top funders at the party's annual Black and White Ball on Monday where tickets cost up to **£1,500** a head.

Last year's event attracted **570** Tory supporters worth **£22 billion**.

The elite Leader's Group of party funders put **£50,000** or more a year each into Tory coffers. They are wine and dined by **Cameron** and his senior ministers.

Many gained more than they donated thanks to the Tories cutting the tax rate of people earning more than **£150,000** from 50 percent

to 45 percent.

Hedge fund boss **Andrew Law** gave the Tories **£300,000** last year. He may have saved nearly **£5 million** in tax from the whopping **£97 million** share of profits.

It means he could have saved up to **£4,858,312** on his income tax thanks to the 5 percent cut, depending on when he was paid the sum.

Another beneficiary is the family of oil tycoon **Ayman Asfari**. They could have saved more than **£2 million** in tax last year.

Income tax on dividend payments—profits dished out by companies—is lower than income tax on earnings. But it still fell by 5 percent for top earners in April 2013 to 37.5 percent.

That put an extra **£100 million** into the pockets of the richest people in the country.

**BALL ORGANISERS** Andrew and Zoe Law

**A PRIMARY** school in Norfolk banned students from looking at the snow out the window. Blinds were drawn in the classrooms of **Stalham Academy** and the children were stopped from touching the snow. In December Reverend **Margaret McPhee** stunned children attending a carol service at the school by announcing that Father Christmas was not real. Which as an expert on mythical beings she should know.



**GREEDY** Tory MP **Tim Yeo** successfully coined it for 32 years before he was finally deselected by his party. Salary, bumper expenses and many outside interests in energy industry are not enough. Yeo has hired his wife **Diane** as his new assistant. Which means we are paying for her to pack his bags.

## Ukip dinosaurs and where is Clegg?

A POLL by YouGov shows a nation divided over whether the Natural History Museum should replace its diplodocus with a blue whale.

While 35 percent wanted the whale, 34 percent defended diplodocus and 31 percent just shrugged.

A breakdown of the poll reveals that people who intend to vote for the Tories and Lib Dems are strongly pro-whale.

Labour voters are torn, but Ukipers are extremely keen on dinosaurs.

**PANIC** BROKE out when it was mooted that **Nick Clegg** campaign in Hampstead and Kilburn. An aide to **Maajid**

**Nawaz** the Lib Dem candidate wrote to his boss warning that it would hurt his chances. "You being associated with the leadership blunts the progress we are making," he advised. **Clegg's** name and image have also been left off Lib Dem leaflets in **Sheffield Hallam**—his own constituency.

## Taxing times for Labour researchers

**FINANCE** bosses accused of promoting tax avoidance on an "industrial scale" are raking in multimillion pound salaries.

**Pricewaterhouse-Coopers' (PwC)** executive board shared **£21.1 million** last year—an average of **£1.83 million** each.

The accountancy giant was accused by MPs of helping global companies cut tax bills by shifting profits to Luxembourg.

**Ikea** and **Coca-Cola** are among the companies said to have taken PwC advice.

**Margaret Hodge**, Labour chair of the Public Accounts Committee, said, "They made **£2 billion** out of tax advice-mega-bucks.

"Too much of it is finding devious ways around stopping global companies paying their fair share."

Which is fair enough, though Labour got some **£540,000** in research assistance from PwC last year.

And once upon a time Hodge used to work for them and still gets a pension from the company.

**Margaret Hodge**

## Honest Tory speaks out on benefits

A **TORY** MP defended benefit sanctions that left an unemployed man starving because he was four minutes late for an appointment.

**Mark Spencer** said the hated regime of docking payments teaches job hunters about timekeeping.

Labour MP **Lisa Nandy** said that a constituent with learning difficulties was left with no electric or gas after his benefits were docked.

**Spencer** said, "It is important that those who are seeking employment learn the discipline of timekeeping, which is an important part of securing and keeping a job."



## FAT CAT OF THE WEEK

No. 68345

**Lord Green**

Tory peer and former boss of **HSBC**

Presided over **HSBC** during a period of massive tax evasion and money laundering for clients through Swiss bank accounts.

Made a lord and a cabinet minister by **David Cameron**

## Care workers on less than the minimum

**MORE THAN** a tenth of UK care workers are being paid less than the national minimum wage of **£6.50** an hour.

The **Resolution** Foundation think tank says about **160,000** people are losing out on an average of **£815** each a year.

It said some firms wrongly did not pay staff when they travelled between clients, on training or when "on call".

The total amount that care staff were missing out on was estimated to be about **£130 million** a year.

The study did not take account of illegal deductions to pay which it said was "the most common reason for non-compliance".

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# London bus drivers gear up for more pay strikes

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

**LONDON BUS** drivers were set to strike again in their battle for equal pay with the capital's 18 bus operators and Transport for London (TfL) on Friday of this week and Monday of next week.

The London Bus service was hit hard last week as drivers in the Unite union walked out for 24 hours on Thursday.

The strike was solid and caused over 1,000 more miles of tailbacks than usual during the morning rush hour—a whopping 1,511 miles.

There are currently 80 different rates of pay and over £3 an hour difference for London bus drivers doing the same job.

Battersea Abellio striker Bertolo told Socialist Worker, “I could start at 4am and have a night shift driver ahead of me being paid £3 an hour more but I’m getting just 9p extra an hour for driving at that time.”

TfL director of surface transport Leon Daniels published an open letter arguing that the strikes were “totally unnecessary”.

## Responsibility

Absolving TfL of responsibility in the dispute he argued, “Bus drivers are employed by the individual (private) bus companies and have been for over 20 years.”

And Daniels, like other TfL directors paid six-figure salaries in the last decade, should know. They are part of what he describes as the “TfL family”.

It is a revolving door between the public regulator and the bus firms’ boardrooms.

Daniels led a management buyout of Capital Citybus after privatisation, which was bought by First in 1998 for £11.1 million. He then worked for FirstGroup for 13 years before taking his current post.

He took over from David Brown,



BUSES WERE cancelled during last week's strike

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

currently the boss of Go-Ahead Group, London's biggest bus operator. Before joining TfL, he was chief executive of Go-Ahead's London bus business.

Brown was also part of a management buy out at CentreWest with current TfL commissioner Peter Hendy in 1994. Hendy made £3.8 million from the privatisation and subsequent sale

of CentreWest to FirstGroup in 1997.

Daniels insists the current system of single agreements between Unite and the companies “has regularly resulted in pay rises above the rate of inflation”.

But pay has been held down as bosses squeeze more out of the TfL contracts.

“Over the last seven years or

so we’ve had only 1 or 2 percent increases but prices keep going up,” Pat, an Arriva driver of 21 years, told Socialist Worker.

She added, “I think I’m in a worse situation now than when I started. The amount I’m left with after bills has gone down and down.”

## Confronted

Bertolo said, “Our wages have been frozen but our director got a £9,000 pay rise last year.” Abellio London and Surrey boss Tony Wilson was confronted by strikers at Battersea.

They asked him why drivers should be paid differently, or if he thought it was fair that experience gained by drivers did not go with them if they work for another firm.

He said, “It’s all about providing an open market” and even insisted the system was “good value for the taxpayer”.

Wilson said he believed Unite’s demand for sector wide negotiations “is illegal because it would set up a cartel”.

And he let slip his real worry—that if bus drivers were all paid the same, and private operators were sidelined, then there would be a clear argument for public ownership.

TfL directors and the bus bosses will fight tooth and nail against equal pay, they share the same interests. Only a determined struggle by the drivers can win.

Franklyn from West Norwood told Socialist Worker, “We have to stand up and fight this or the next generation of drivers will be worse off. They have given us no choice.”

“Really we should make sure nothing moves out of the garages—if that means going all out then that’s what we have to do.”

**What’s your story?**  
Email with your ideas  
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

## IN BRIEF

### Cuts cause homelessness

CUTS IN benefits have led to a massive rise in homelessness over the past four years according to a new study by Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The report says rough sleeping has increased by 37 percent.

### Resist Tories’ abortion attack

A VOTE on a law change to restrict abortion rights has been postponed until 23 February.

Abortion Rights protesters demonstrated outside parliament on Monday of this week when the amendment was due to be debated.

### Trident nukes cost a bomb

A NATIONAL Audit Office report has revealed that over £4 billion will be spent replacing Trident nuclear missiles even before a vote in parliament next year.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) underestimated the cost of upgrades by £151 million.

### New Cardiff Three inquiry

THE GOVERNMENT is set to launch an inquiry into why a case against a dozen former South Wales police officers was abandoned.

They were charged with perverting the course of justice in the Lynette White murder investigation 27 years ago.

For background to the case go to bit.ly/1DeB9MI

## Tory bankers—hypocrites and thieves

>>>continued from page 1

their mates wriggle out of paying tax, and get richer while everyone else has been tightening their belts.

The head of HSBC, Stephen Green, was appointed a trade minister by Cameron in 2010.

Tax officials across the world have known since 2010 that the bank colluded with hundreds of wealthy clients to conceal money in undeclared Swiss accounts.

The Guardian newspaper reports that HSBC used “its Geneva branch to hand out bricks of cash in a variety of currencies from euros to pounds”.

The Tories’ millionaire backers were out to thank them for sticking by the rich at the secret “black and white party” on Monday. Tory

## FIGURE IT OUT

**2.2 percent**

Average annual fall in real wages between 2010 and 2014

**£13 billion**

Amount hoarded by UK tax dodgers in HSBC's Swiss bank accounts

**£210,000**

Sum paid by a Tory donor for a small bronze statue of Margaret Thatcher

supporters paid up to £15,000 a table to join David Cameron for a luxury fundraising dinner at a posh Mayfair hotel.

Guests bid for special treats. One paid £210,000 for a statue of Margaret Thatcher.

Others bid to go on a “500 bird pheasant shoot” (with loaders and guns provided). One guest paid £50,000 for a JCB digger.

But it’s hard to believe that even the most enthusiastic Tory would bid for dinner with former education secretary Michael Gove at his house, or an “iron man” endurance course with Iain Duncan Smith.

Put simply, it’s time to get rid of the Tories.

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## IN THIS WEEK

**1997**

### Stephen Lawrence inquest ends

AN INQUEST concluded that black teenager Stephen Lawrence was killed in a racist attack.

Two of his killers, Gary Dobson and David Norris, were only sent down in 2012. Jamie and Neil Acourt, and Luke Knight were never convicted.





# Cops and council cuts failed abuse victims says new report

by SADIE ROBINSON

**WHILE MOST** media coverage on the Rotherham child abuse scandal has focused on “Asian gangs”, a new report is a damning indictment of South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the local council.

Government official Louise Casey’s report into Rotherham Council was published last week.

It was commissioned in the wake of Professor Alexis Jay’s 2014 report into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in the town. Jay estimated that 1,400 children had been exploited between 1997 and 2013.

Children were raped, assaulted and threatened with extreme violence. Casey said the authorities had “no understanding of the level of intimidation victims were experiencing”.

One victim “got a text saying that if she didn’t come out they’d shoot her. We called the police. They said, ‘well why doesn’t she just switch her phone off?’”

Casey’s report said SYP “perpetuates the cycle of abuse and psychological distortion suffered by the victims, by reinforcing the message that no crime has been committed, and that they are to blame for their own treatment”.

## Police

It added, “This attitude continues in the police to this day.”

It questioned the “phenomenally low conviction rate” for abuse despite regular references to “ongoing police operations”.

One former cop said police saw victims as “second class citizens” and “blamed” girls for abuse.

Such attitudes weren’t restricted to police.

A councillor serving at the time of the inspection said abusers were “fooled” into thinking child victims were older than they were.

One child’s case file describes a child as having “willingly gone” with her abusers to a flat and “consented to sexual activity”. The child was 13 at the time.

David Cameron claimed the abuse

## BACK STORY

Louise Casey’s report into Rotherham Council was published last week

- It is based on over 200 meetings with councillors, police, victims and others

- It also reviewed documents and sampled cases of vulnerable children

- Inspectors used “three different lists of children’s names which had been linked to CSE and where it was reasonable to assume the children had been harmed”

wasn’t a problem of “resources”. Yet references to resources crop up again and again in Casey’s report.

The CSE team “suffers from excessive case loads”. Staff are “often exhausted, over-loaded and overwhelmed”. Support for victims is “sadly lacking”.

There is “not enough capacity” to properly undertake preventative work.

Outreach work to identify victims at risk is “insufficiently resourced”.

Casey’s report said cuts mean “some services no longer have the capacity to function effectively”.

The council has already missed its own targets for tackling CSE.

It had “available uncommitted reserves of £10.222m” at the end of last March.

The council announced last September that £120,000 would be made available to support victims in the short term.

Inspectors said the package “falls short of what is required”.

And there are “serious concerns” about how victims are supported when they become adults.

As one victim put it, “They’ve got a poster with my birthday on it when I turn 18 and then they don’t need to bother with me.”



More Online...

A longer version is available online >> [socialistworker.co.uk](http://socialistworker.co.uk)



A NEW report has been published into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham (above)

## The real figures behind the headlines

CASEY’S REPORT said that Professor Jay found evidence that at least 1,400 children suffered CSE and that “the majority of the perpetrators were described as ‘Asian’ by victims”.

This gives the misleading impression that hundreds of victims identified their abuser as Asian in Jay’s report.

Jay’s figure was an estimate based on a list of 988 children “known to children’s social care or the police”. The Jay report looked at 66 case files in total, the vast majority of which showed “clear evidence” that children had suffered abuse.

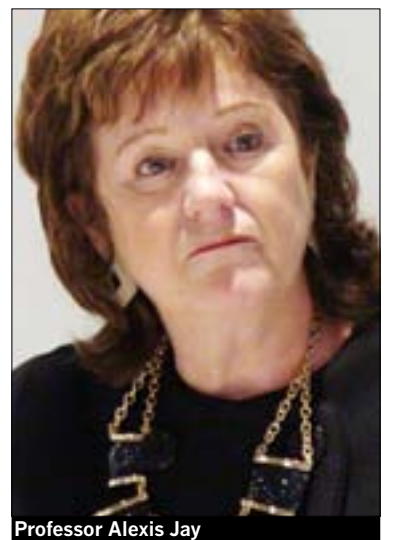
Jay added, “In a large number of the historic cases in particular, most of the victims in the cases

we sampled were white British children, and the majority of the perpetrators were from minority ethnic communities.”

So in a large number, not a majority, of 66 cases, most perpetrators were from ethnic minorities. This is not the same as saying that Asian men abused 1,400 children—but it hasn’t stopped the right wing press.

Casey’s own report points out that abuse isn’t confined to grooming or exploitation by strangers, “Many had suffered neglect and abuse within the home”, it said.

A focus on Asian men as abusers leaves children at risk of abuse from those who don’t fit the profile.



Professor Alexis Jay

## FIGURE IT OUT

**£10 million**

The “available uncommitted reserves” Rotherham Council had at the end of last March

**£120,000**

How much it made available to support victims in the short term

**33%**

The council’s spending power that will be cut by 2016

## Few get support they need

ONE councillor referred to Professor Jay’s “limited source base”.

This shouldn’t diminish the fact that children have suffered serious abuse. Yet it is true that Jay did not identify 1,400 victims and sampled 66 cases (see above).

The report complained of a councillor who was concerned about



Louise Casey

focusing on CSE because “most abuse happens within the

home”. But this is true—and all abused children should be supported. The real problem is that very few seemed to get the support they needed.

Casey said the council has “struggled with the issue of race”. This seems to amount to councillors not wanting to focus mainly on Asian men as abusers and didn’t want to be racist.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Nationwide refinery strike hits big US oil companies

by ANNETTE MACKIN

OIL refinery workers in the United States have walked out in their first national strike in 35 years.

About 5,500 workers at 11 plants are taking part.

Picket lines have been set up outside refineries in California, Kentucky, Texas, Washington, Indiana and Ohio.

The plants account for 13 percent of US refining capacity.

The strike has hit big oil firms Shell, BP, Marathon Petroleum and Lyondell Basell.

The strike forced the 166,000 barrel-a-day Martinez plant in California to shut down completely.

The workers' United Steelworkers union called the strike on 31 January after talks



Picket outside Galveston Bay refinery, Texas

with bosses over contracts broke down.

The strike is about pay and safety.

The union wants to double the size of the annual pay increases, get more healthcare coverage and reduced use of non-union contract workers.

The walkout initially involved nine plants but the strike spread

last weekend as workers in Indiana and Ohio downed tools.

A full walkout of refinery workers would disrupt 64 percent of US fuel output.

The last national strike by oil refinery workers was in 1980, when they struck for three months.

## JORDAN

# Charles attacks Muslims as regime launches airstrikes

THE REGIME in Jordan claims to have carried out at least 56 airstrikes on Islamist group Isis since last Thursday.

This follows the execution of Jordanian military pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh by Isis last week.

The Jordanian government has said its response to the execution would be



King Abdullah II

"earth shattering".

Prince Charles began a six-day tour of the Middle East last weekend in Jordan.

He was there to hold talks with the king, Abdullah II.

Before he went he accused young Muslims of not abiding by British "values and outlooks."

He had less to say about the values and outlooks of the Jordanian regime—which punishes people for criticising the government.

## EGYPT

# Police attack football fans

AT LEAST 30 Egyptians died on Sunday after police attacked Zamalek football fans at the Air Force stadium in New Cairo.

Fans said they were waiting to go in through a tiny gate when they were teargassed. This led to a stampede, followed by security forces repeatedly attacking people.

Many of the victims

were teenagers.

Football fans played a role in the Egyptian revolution and are hated by the authorities.

Incredibly the game went ahead regardless and only one player refused to appear.

●Revolutionary Socialist lawyer Mahienour el-Massry and nine others were sentenced to two years in prison and a

fine of 5,000 Egyptian pounds each on Monday of this week..

They were charged with taking part in an unauthorised protest.

**Revolution, Repression and Resistance**

Conference to discuss events in the region four years after the Egyptian Revolution. With Maryam al-Khawaja, Sherif Azer, Owen Jones and others. 13-14 Feb, Soas, Russell Square, London. [egyptsolidarityinitiative.org](http://egyptsolidarityinitiative.org)

## Socialist Worker

### WHAT WE THINK

# HATE BOSSES AND WARS? THEN YOU'RE NOT ALONE

**T**URN ON the news, and it can seem like everyone's against you. There's smarmy Tory prime minister David Cameron boasting that conditions for the bosses had "not been this good for a long time".

Perhaps he was referring to the previous night's lavish Tory fundraising ball. Or the top banker who Cameron made a minister after he helped big firms dodge tax.

Then there's Nigel Farage's motley band of racists—and all the politicians desperate to outdo Ukip in bashing migrants and Muslims.

The trade unions set up the party that's leading in the polls. Yet its leading figures spent the past week going on about how much they love bosses.

Privately educated shadow education secretary and baron's son Tristram Hunt gushed that Labour was "furiously, passionately, aggressively pro business".

Labour figures Ed Balls and Chuka Umunna rubbed it in at the British Chamber of Commerce.

Umunna hailed the bloodsucking capitalists as "national heroes". He swore, "We

will work every day, strain every sinew, to make your lives that bit easier."

But if you're sickened by the politicians pandering to bosses and racists, there is some good news.

You're not alone—and polling company YouGov has the proof. It has found that voters want the opposite of what Labour's leaders say.

More than twice as many want more spending on public services to be a higher priority than the deficit. This proportion is even higher among swing Labour voters.

Wars led by the US are also deeply unpopular. And the biggest



**The biggest turnoff for voters was being positive about big business**

turnoff was being "positive about big business".

The majority of swing voters want Labour to "stand up to big business, supporting ordinary people against powerful corporations".

YouGov boss Stephan Shakespeare calls these issues the "three trump cards" that could win the election for Labour. "It's as if the electorate are saying: we're sick of austerity," he wrote last month.

The relentless propaganda has taken its toll on some issues such as welfare and immigration.

But even here the picture is contradictory.

Some people say they are concerned about immigration in principle, but have very different views of the migrants they meet in real life.

That experience of living and working together is a good basis for building a movement that unites people against the racists.

These figures should boost every Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition campaigner and shows the audience for a bigger left.

They should give us hope that we can build workers' fightback and a socialist alternative.

# CULTURE NOT TO BLAME

**T**HE ROTHERHAM abuse scandal has led some to celebrate Britain's "progressive" society.

The authorities dismissed and blamed victims, and failed to protect them (see page 4).

But right wingers prefer to focus on the fact that abusers were described as Asian in many cases referred to in official reports.

Melanie Phillips blamed "Muslim culture" in The Times newspaper. "In Muslim society women are treated as inferior people, and

non-Muslims are widely regarded as trash," she claimed.

Writing in the Daily Mail newspaper, Sarah Vine said Muslim men saw non-Muslim girls as "little more than objects of Western decadence to be used for their own warped pleasures".

Vine went on to celebrate "belonging to a culture that values and respects women as equals".

This is nonsense. Sexism and women's oppression are embedded in our class society—they are not caused by "Muslim culture".

Police forces dismiss rape and abuse victims. Rapes are classed as "no crime" and evidence is "lost", while victims are intimidated out of fighting for justice.

For all the "value" society puts on women, abuse victims are left with no support.

Those at the top of society have been implicated in abuse scandals. Those attacking Muslims pose as being on the side of women. In reality, they want to shore up a system that keeps women down.

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## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Germany blinks over Ukraine crisis

**THE CIVIL war in Ukraine has several dimensions. The first is the fighting on the ground. This is escalating despite last September's Minsk ceasefire agreement, which was supposed to end it.**

Ukraine's Western-backed government is pushing to regain the territory it lost to rebels in the south east. Meanwhile, the pro Russian forces are seeking to expand the area under their control. The intelligence website Stratfor speculates that this reflects Russia's aim of carving out an enclave that will be viable and defensible in the long term.

Both sides rely heavily on ultra-nationalist militias and indiscriminately use heavy weapons. The estimated death toll of 5,000 is a snapshot of the civilian population's suffering in southeastern Ukraine.

Secondly, there is the much larger geopolitical struggle involving the US, the European Union (EU), and Russia. This arguably began more than a decade ago in the lead-up to the 2003 Iraq war.

France, Germany, and Russia led EU opposition to George W Bush and Tony Blair's invasion plans. The US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld dismissed them as "old Europe".

He said, "If you look at the entire Nato Europe today, the centre of gravity is shifting east." In other words, the US could split the EU, playing off the new central and eastern European members against the historic core.

As I pointed out in my book *Bonfire of Illusions*, Russian president Vladimir Putin has shown that "more than one could play that game". We saw this first in autumn 2008 when France, Germany, and Italy blocked the imposition of sanctions on Russia after it had militarily crushed the pro Western Georgian government.

### Game

Putin has been playing the same game in Ukraine but for much higher stakes. As in the case of Georgia, he is trying to keep Nato away from Russia's borders.

But Putin is also trying prevent Ukraine, with all its industrial capacity and natural resources, slipping decisively into the Western sphere of influence.

Up to last week, Putin hadn't been doing so well.

The German chancellor Angela Merkel took personal charge of the European response to the Ukraine crisis and sought to talk Putin into a deal.

But the shooting down of a Malaysian Airlines flight over the war zone in July tipped the balance in favour of EU support for increasing tough sanctions on Russia.

However, the situation changed again last week. Merkel and French president Francois Hollande flew to Ukraine's capital Kiev and Moscow in an unsuccessful effort to a broker a deal.

This was almost certainly prompted by the growing pressure in Washington for the US to supply heavy weapons to the Ukrainian government.

US president Barack Obama is reluctant to adopt this policy. The latest defence budget shows that his priority remains to contain growing Chinese power in Asia.

But both the Republicans who control congress and his own vice president, Joe Biden, want to send arms to Ukraine.

Both Biden and Merkel spoke at the Munich security conference last weekend. Biden had already poured scorn on efforts to talk to Putin.

Merkel warned, "This crisis cannot be solved by military means." She and Hollande fear a proxy war in Ukraine between the US and Russia could easily escalate out of control.

There is also a new dimension to this crisis. One of the first things the new Syriza government in Greece did was to denounce the EU sanctions against Russia.

Other political leaders challenging the EU mainstream have expressed sympathy for Putin, including Ukip leader Nigel Farage, French Nazi Marine Le Pen, and ex Scottish National Party leader Alex Salmond.

The Financial Times newspaper's Gideon Rachman complained last week, "The rise of the political extremes within Europe threatens EU unity on Russia—making it more likely that the Kremlin will be emboldened and that the crisis will escalate." Rachman also opposes the EU making any concessions to Greece over its debt.

The interaction of these crises underlines that the EU is locked into policies driving it towards disaster. Merkel has blinked over Ukraine. Let's hope she does over Greece as well.



WORKERS MOUNT a picket line in front of the National Gallery last Tuesday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# Strikers at National Gallery take on the union-busters

by ANNETTE MACKIN

**NATIONAL Gallery workers in London completed a five-day strike last Saturday.**

Gallery bosses want to privatise 400 out of 600 jobs. They have also backed off from promises to pay the London Living Wage, meaning that the National Gallery is the only London gallery that doesn't pay it.

On the eve of the strike, bosses suspended PCS union rep Candy Udwin in an attempt to undermine the walkout.

But it backfired, as more than 8,000 people have now signed a statement calling for her immediate reinstatement. And it has made gallery workers more determined to resist privatisation.

### Gag

Bosses have tried to gag workers from speaking out. But one worker said, "We talked to management to try and get the best possible settlement, but they will not negotiate with us."

"They want to tell us what they want and for us to agree with it. They are trying to destabilise the union and want to cut out the union completely."

"This is the first step in us saying we're not going to accept it. We're going to fight it and carry on fighting it."

The gallery's board of

### HOW TO HELP

● **Sign the petition to reinstate Candy**  
[action.pcs.org.uk/page/s/no-privatisation-at-the-national-gallery](http://action.pcs.org.uk/page/s/no-privatisation-at-the-national-gallery)

● **Sign the petition against privatisation**  
[you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/no-privatisation-at-national-gallery](http://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/no-privatisation-at-national-gallery)

● **Use the Reinstate Candy poster for a solidarity photo or invite a striker to speak at your union or campaign meeting.**

Email [noprivatisationatNG@gmail.com](mailto:noprivatisationatNG@gmail.com)

● **Funds are urgently needed to back the strike. Make a donation.**

Donate to Sort code 086001  
 Account no 20169002  
 or send cheques to  
 Culture Sector Hardship Fund, c/o PCS North West Regional Centre, Jack Jones House, 1 Islington, Liverpool L3 8EG

trustees include former Bank of England governor Mervyn King and billionaire hedge fund manager Sir Michael Hintze.

They have already handed over an entire wing of the gallery to private security firm CIS.

Candy was suspended pending investigation for allegedly supplying information about the costs of using CIS to a PCS full time official.

Those who have signed the petition for her reinstatement include left wing Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, journalist Polly Toynbee, NUT deputy general secretary Kevin Courtney and Prospect union national secretary Alan Leighton.

The strike was solid, with most of the gallery shut down throughout the walkout.

On Thursday some 150

strikers and supporters marched down Whitehall to confront gallery boss Sir Mark Getty with a petition against privatisation signed by 40,000 people.

His security chief Andy Baxter took it instead.

### Donations

Thousands of donations have poured in from PCS branches and other unions for the strike fund.

V&A Museum workers, Homerton Hospital Union, Unison housing stewards and King's College Unison have all made donations.

And on the last day of the present round of strikes, strikers went to Dulwich Picture Gallery to support workers whose jobs are under threat.

Talks at the Acas conciliation service are timetabled for this week. But no date was confirmed as Socialist Worker went to press.

Workers are clear that the fight against privatisation and the fight to reinstate Candy are interlinked—and that further action is necessary to win.

A branch meeting is set for this week, and more strikes are likely if bosses refuse to back down on either.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka came to the picket lines last Saturday and told them there could be no just settlement without Candy's reinstatement.



Candy (left) and Mark Serwotka

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN



# How can we take on austerity in the general election?

There is a growing debate among socialists in Britain about how to build the alternative to the cuts that the poor want and need, writes **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

**A GROWING number of socialists are breaking with Labour to build a working class alternative.**

Kingsley Abrams was a Labour councillor in Lambeth, south London. He announced last week that he now aims to stand as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in the Bermondsey and Old Southwark parliamentary constituency.

He has stood in the area before as a Labour parliamentary candidate.

Kingsley spoke to Socialist Worker about his decision to leave Labour.

"I'm going to be standing against Simon Hughes," he said. "He's a Lib Dem minster in the government that's been pushing through all the cuts."

"But I'm also going to be standing against Labour candidate Neil Coyle. He's a Lambeth Labour councillor."

"Coyle has been at the forefront of pushing through cuts—that's all he's done," explained Kingsley.

Many still argue that breaking to Labour's left will only keep the Tories in office.

But Kingsley said, "I don't believe that's a real argument."

"There is a real alternative to austerity, which means opposing cuts and supporting jobs and growth. It's our duty to put that forward."



Kingsley Abrams

Until he left, Kingsley was in trouble with the local Labour leadership for opposing the cuts.

But many left wingers still think it is wrong to stand against Labour. Some Labour Party members hope to "reclaim" the organisation for the left.

Around 130 people attended a Left Platform meeting last Saturday, in response to a call out from left wing Labour MP John McDonnell.

It discussed what the left's bottom lines would be after May's general election if Labour forms a minority or coalition government.

John said, "Ending austerity has to be a key demand—we cannot let

Ed Balls continue austerity."

Kingsley attended the meeting and John responded to him, acknowledging, "The party is vulnerable to its left."

Many speakers said it was the wrong decision and that there was "no future for the left outside of Labour".

Kingsley said, "John McDonnell and I disagree, and I wish good luck to those who have stayed. But I believe that it has to be fought from outside the Labour Party."

"I was being suspended like every other week, and the intensity of cuts is growing."

"I had to ask myself, can I really articulate opposition to austerity in Labour, with the right wing leadership? The answer is 'No'."

"I'm not saying TUSC is the British Syriza, but Syriza was polling less than 10 percent in 2009 and it is now in government in Greece."

"You have to start from somewhere and discuss building that alternative."

"I believe TUSC provides us with that opportunity."

**On other pages...**

Protests against racism and fascism >>Page 20

## THE GREENS

**THE RMT rail union's president Peter Pinkney announced last week that he was joining the Green Party. He said, "Labour is no longer the working class party... The party of the left is now the Green Party."**

But the Greens do not focus on the working class.

And as they try and present themselves as a respectable alternative they distance themselves from their more radical policies.

So the party said it would give everyone in Britain a "citizens' income" whether they work or not. The right wing media said this would cost billions.

But rather than taking the money from the rich the leadership of the Greens rushed to ditch the policy.

We can do better than Labour's leaders to take on austerity



**THE MARCH for Homes last week brought people together to challenge austerity**

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## Meet a **TUSC** candidate **Ayesha Saleem Edinburgh East**

**THE TRADE Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) will be standing parliamentary candidates across Britain in May's general election.**

Ayesha Saleem will be standing in Edinburgh East.

"I'm the anti-austerity, anti-racist candidate for a socialist alternative," she told Socialist Worker. "I'm involved in the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and a member of the Unite union."

"I was also part of the campaign that got the bedroom tax scrapped in Scotland."

Ayesha campaigned as part of the Yes movement for the Scottish referendum last year.

This saw a huge level of engagement with politics among working class people who wanted to fight for a better society.

Ayesha wants to bring the spirit of the Yes movement into her campaign by involving

working class people.

"We will be doing stalls and going door to door," she said. "We'll also be holding hustings where people can challenge the candidates."

The Labour Party is suffering for helping the Tories win the referendum. A recent poll shows it could lose all but a handful of its seats in Scotland.

Some on the left are now calling for a vote for the Scottish National Party (SNP). They say it's wrong to stand against SNP candidates.

But Ayesha believes it's right to challenge the SNP. She said, "The SNP is a middle class nationalist party."

"No matter what it says, it is a party that is on the side of big business."

She added, "It has implemented austerity in local councils and wants a low wage economy."

"That's why we need a principled socialist alternative."

Go to [tusc.org.uk](http://tusc.org.uk)





## GREECE IN BRIEF

## New president could be a Tory

THE GREEK parliament is set to vote on a new president this week. Syriza is expected to put forward a Tory opposition figure after prime minister Alexis Tsipras declared a “government of national salvation”.

Former Athens mayor turned EU commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos is considered one of the most likely candidates.

## Workers demand their jobs back

WORKERS AT state broadcaster ERT were set to protest on Wednesday of this week demanding their jobs and services are reinstated.

They have kept broadcasting under workers’ control since former Tory prime minister Antonis Samaras sacked them in 2011.

Tsipras has pledged to reopen ERT—but with no guarantee of restoring all channels and jobs.

## Syriza to sink hated treaty

NEW DEPUTY minister for administrative reform Georgios Katrougkalos pledged that Syriza would never ratify the proposed TTIP treaty.

This could be the final nail in the treaty’s coffin, as it would need to be ratified by all European Union member states.

## Solidarity actions in Britain

SOLIDARITY demonstrations have been called in London and Edinburgh this week.

There will be a protest outside the Scottish Parliament on Saturday from 12.30pm. Syriza London and other organisations have called a protest on Wednesday of this week at 6.30pm near Big Ben. There will also be a rally this Sunday at 1pm in Trafalgar Square.

## FIGURE IT OUT

**£188 billion**

Amount Greece owes to the Troika—the ECB, EU and IMF

**25 percent**

Rate of unemployment after accepting the Troika’s austerity measures in return for the “bailout”

**10,000**

Sacked public sector workers fighting for their jobs back.

# Bankers pile on pressure as Syriza challenges EU

by DAVE SEWELL

**GREEK PRIME minister Alexis Tsipras laid out his government’s policy on Sunday of last week, as parliament opened for the first time since the elections.**

MPs were expected to endorse the programme of Tsipras’ radical left party Syriza on Tuesday of this week.

Its measures include an increase in the minimum wage, the rehiring of thousands of public sector workers sacked by the old government, and the repeal of a hated land tax.

Some of these are now happening more slowly or with more conditions attached than when first announced.

But Tsipras said it was an “irreversible decision” that the government fulfil its promises “in their entirety”.

It was a different story when Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis met his German counterpart Martin Schauble on Thursday of last week.

He said campaign promises could be overturned for the sake of a deal with Greece’s creditors—and that the majority of the reforms forced through with the bailout needn’t ever be repealed.

## Forced

Syriza was elected last month on a programme of rejecting the austerity that has been forced on Greece as part of European-led “bailouts” of its government bank debts.

The current bailout agreement expires this month. And Tsipras refuses to apply for an extension.

But his government has also made clear it won’t default on the debt or leave the euro.

In a series of meetings with European leaders last week Varoufakis offered a “debt swap” that would mean Greece would keep paying the debt for decades.

But German chancellor Angela Merkel and her allies recognise that granting a compromise to Syriza could open the doors to revolts against austerity elsewhere.

As Varoufakis was meeting Schauble, the European Central Bank (ECB) cut off support for Greek banks. It ruled that Greece’s government bonds were no longer acceptable as collateral.

Panos Garganas, editor of Socialist Worker’s sister paper Workers’ Solidarity, said, “It’s a completely arbitrary move, and very provocative. It has no reason other than putting pressure on the Greek government.

“But Syriza is trapped by its position that there will be no break with the European Union, no unilateral moves. Each time it makes a compromise the other side responds

with more pressure.”

Protests were called last week through social media, in an attempt to revive the movement of square occupations that took place in 2011—but this time in more or less critical support of the government.

Protester Dimitra Spyridopoulou was on the Athens demonstration. She said, “The decision by the ECB demonstrates the pressure on Greece, but that’s nothing compared to the problems of people who are starving or suicidal.”

## Victory

Panos said, “There is a mood where people feel they’ve had a victory against the parties of austerity, so how dare the ECB tell them to forget that.

“There’s a debate about what direction that could take. Some say you have to support the government, others that you must support the demands of workers.

“The unions haven’t taken action yet—if they had called the protests they would have been massive. But nor have any workers agreed to put their demands on ice to help the government come to a deal.”

Key European summits this week were to be one of the last chances for Syriza to get a deal from Greece’s creditors before its bailout expires. But the forces of austerity show no sign of backing down without a fight that Syriza alone won’t lead.

THOUSANDS JOINED rallies in support of the new Greek government last week

## ‘We need to break with the racist agenda’

ANTI-FASCISTS protested in the Keratsini district of Piraeus on Saturday of last week following clashes with the fascist Golden Dawn on election day.

Anti-fascists and anti-racists across Greece are gearing up for a protest on Saturday 21 March against Golden Dawn and the racist agenda that fuelled their rise.

Petros Constantinou, coordinator of the Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat (Keerfa), told Socialist Worker, “Campaigning has really got going since the election. People are organising meetings and rallies in their neighbourhoods, trade unions, schools and universities.

“There’s a sense of optimism after the election. The new government has pledged to bring in citizenship for the children of immigrants. They will be leading the march to make sure it happens.

“And the courts have finalised the charges against Golden Dawn, and are expected

Anti-fascist protest in Piraeus

to set a date for the trial very soon.”

But he warned, “It doesn’t look like Syriza will be closing the detention camps for migrants. And Golden Dawn wants to be the opposition to a Syriza government.

“We don’t want to see the police protecting Golden Dawn rallies—as has already happened once since the election. We need to push ahead with their trial and break with the racist agenda of Fortress Europe.”



## There is an alternative

IAN ALMOND and Stacey Mackay argue that Labour is the best we can hope for (Letters, 7 February)

But as Labour has failed the working class, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is rising like a phoenix against austerity.

When union leader and TUSC co-founder Bob Crow died last year, even his detractors had to admire him. He challenged the capitalists head on.

Now the tide is turning. Workers are saying no more paying for the bankers' crisis. No more benefits, wage or pension cuts. No more food banks, NHS waiting lists or runaway rents.

We are tired of the politicians in the Westminster ivory tower. And we are taking them on for our class.

Esther Ball  
Birmingham

## Anti-racists need cash

UKIP IS on the warpath and Labour, Tory and Lib Dem politicians are all brushing up their anti-immigrant credentials.

So the Movement Against Xenophobia (Max) plans a poster campaign in the last two weeks before the general election.

Max plans to put a series of posters in train stations and the London Tube.

But it needs the cash to do it—something like £66,000. If you can, please make a contribution via the crowd-funding site below.

Alan Gibson  
MAX steering committee

[crowdfunder.co.uk/i-am-an-immigrant-poster-campaign](http://crowdfunder.co.uk/i-am-an-immigrant-poster-campaign)

## There's no debate with Nazis who want us dead

KARL NICHOLAS thinks letting Nazis speak exposes them (Letters, 7 February).

But when Nazi Nick Griffin was given a platform on the BBC's Question Time, 2,000 people joined his party.

Allowing fascists to speak has consequences—such as racist attacks.

You wouldn't give an axe to an axe-murderer. So why give a platform in the name of freedom to people who would crush all freedom?



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## Tower Hamlets probe is just a racist attack on democracy

THE ELECTORAL court currently investigating Tower Hamlets council in east London is part of an attack on mayor Lutfur Rahman and his administration.

It's also an attack on local democracy in Tower Hamlets more generally. And it has a very strong undercurrent of racism.

There is a long tradition in the borough, going back to attacks on the Respect party and earlier.

The impression is created that people in Tower Hamlets—by which they mean Bangladeshi people—are political zombies.

The narrative becomes that they just do what they're told and vote for who they're told to and as a result it's very easy to cheat.

Late last year we already had

Tory minister Eric Pickles sending unelected commissioners to run parts of our council. They have no democratic accountability.

Now this electoral court is technically separate, because it's not part of the government. But it's part of the same process.

I'm not here to defend the mayor and I'm not in his organisation. If investigations reveal wrongdoing then it should be dealt with. But as far as I can see it's a campaign of smears.

Pickles acted on a report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers administrators. It is very long and cost £1 million to produce.

It doesn't say anything specific that's illegal or systematic. But it's enough to begin to create an

impression. It gets about that the mayor is "a bit dodgy"—with no evidence.

As it gets closer to the election I think we'll see more of this.

It comes from people who want to see Tower Hamlets become once again a safe seat for Labour.

They want it to be like nearby Newham, where Labour has a complete political monopoly.

But that's not the tradition here—and they don't like it.

They don't like to be challenged. They didn't like Respect. They don't like the mayor.

And they won't like it if I stand as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Glyn Robbins  
East London

## We mustn't let our anger melt away

DESPITE another record hot year and aggressive fracking plans, there is no debate on climate change in the election so far.

This could be that the main parties have little to say—or it could be that environmental protest has gone off the boil.

Time to Act, a major London demonstration on Saturday 7 March, must



Last year's climate march. Was it enough?

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

change the complacency and force a debate.

This polluting economy will make the world more than four degrees hotter, devastate agriculture and bring mass starvation.

We can make a

difference. Organise meetings. Sell copies of the One Million Climate Jobs report. Build this march on a huge scale. Our future depends on it.

Alan Burgess  
Portsmouth

Just a thought...

## Don't frack Welsh valleys

THE WELSH Assembly's pledge to ban fracking is welcome. It shows the effect of protests—and the coming elections. But we'll have to wait for the proof of the pudding.

Will Neath Port Talbot council stand firm against fracking near Pontrhydyfen village in the Afan valley?

People there are up in arms about the threat to their water and environment. But the fracking firm is pushing hard, coming back with a second application after its first was rejected.

And will the ban cover undersea drilling, like the plans to burn coal seams under Swansea Bay?

Huw Pudner  
Swansea

## Family can't live in Oxford

I READ about a family in Oxford who the council offered accommodation in Coventry—50 miles away from family and friends.

They refused to move—and have since been removed from the Oxford council housing waiting list.

Disgusting!

Paul Harris  
on Facebook

## The SNP isn't good enough

SOCIALIST Tommy Sheridan calls for a blanket vote for the Scottish National Party (SNP) in the general election.

This is extremely problematic. The SNP is pro-business, pro-European Union and pro-austerity.

Some left groups are abstaining. But TUSC and the Scottish Socialist Party will both stand.

We'll see an SNP landslide. But putting up a left opposition can lead to future successes.

Liam Currie  
Motherwell

## A scape-coat for austerity?

MAYBE GREEK finance minister Yanis Varoufakis is the rebel who'll finally defeat the cuts.

Or maybe he isn't. But don't ask the British media about this important question.

They are only interested in "reporting" on his jacket!

Carla Cranston  
Ipswich





## WHAT SOCIALISTS SAY

# Isis and the fight against imperialism

MOST PEOPLE will be understandably horrified by Isis's latest atrocity, the burning alive of Jordanian military pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh.

Isis is a deeply reactionary and sectarian group, carrying out murders of its political opponents and other religious and ethnic minorities. But our rulers are using its attacks to further clamp down on Muslims in Britain, and bolster support for their intervention in the region.

US imperialism has always tried to keep a grip on Iraq because of its large oil deposits.

To do this it has inflicted horrors on a whole different level to Isis. Western sanctions in the 1990s and the last war have killed two million Iraqis.

And during the 2003 invasion the West shelled Fallujah with white phosphorus incendiary weapons and tortured civilians.

Isis is a product of such imperialism—and also of the failure of the Arab revolutions to break through.

## War

The US has smashed Iraqi society through a cycle of war, sanctions and free market “shock therapy”.

The West's brutal crackdown on protests after the war triggered a national resistance movement. To face it down the US used divide and rule at every turn.

First it sought to turn Shia and Sunni against one another.

It brought Shia politicians into the government and got the Shia clerical hierarchy to bless the 2004 elections.

While there was a large turnout in Shia and Kurdish areas, the majority of Sunnis boycotted the election.

The sectarian Shia politicians then quickly moved to consolidate their position, using nepotism and corruption.

This created the space in which Isis's forerunner Al Qaida in Iraq



Isis fighters

(AQI) could grow. While AQI was small and had narrow politics, many Sunni organisations tolerated it because it was militarily effective.

But here the US once again used divide and rule. AQI's sectarian attacks started to alienate other Sunni organisations so the US promised Sunni groups “power sharing” in exchange for crushing it.

There was a chance that this sectarian fighting could be overcome when the ripples of the Egyptian revolution spread to Iraq in 2011.

But the Iraq government's brutal response fertilised the ground for AQI's growth. While beaten in Iraq, it was able to cross the border and regroup in Syria.

In response to the Syrian revolution, the Assad regime launched a brutal sectarian civil war where AQI, now Isis, was able to become the dominant faction.

## Rise

The counter-revolutions have also fuelled Isis's rise.

Many people say that the problem with Isis is with Islamist movements as a whole. But Islamism is not a homogenous set of inherently backward ideas.

Islamist groups such as Hamas in Palestine have built bases and led struggles against imperialism.

But Isis is incapable of defeating imperialism because it is sectarian and reactionary to its core.

The real alternative against imperialism lies with the sort of revolutions that swept the Middle East in 2011.

These can unite people against imperialism and their own rulers.

In Britain we have to fight our rulers' attempts to use Isis to justify more air strikes and build the anti-war movement.

Migrant workers from many countries took part in London's bus strike last week. Strikers told **Raymie Kiernan** about why they came to Britain, what their lives are really like—and how they fight to defend their rights at work and drive up pay for everyone

**P**OLITICIANS say migrant workers are a problem. They claim they must be “tough” on immigration to protect workers born in Britain, who supposedly see migrants as an enemy.

But one group of workers in particular has smashed these myths.

Migrant workers make up some 23 percent of Britain's passenger transport industry. The figure rises to 47 percent in London, where workers are striking to raise wages across the capital's 18 bus companies.

Their fight punctures the myth that migrants drive down wages. Instead it shows that the bosses are to blame—and that a united workforce can fight to win better pay for all.

Alem came to London from Eritrea, east Africa, in 1998 and is a bus driver in south west London.

“In my garage we have people from Ethiopia, Ghana, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, South Africa and many parts of Europe,” he told Socialist Worker on the picket line last week.

## Jobs

“If they were doing things in my country that would create jobs and help us, such as building houses, nobody would want to come here.

“But because there is nothing



**It was hard starting over in a new country after fleeing the war. Remembering that, I try to help out the young drivers who've come from Poland or somewhere like that.**

**Awaale from Somalia**

there, we have to come here.”

Awaale, an east London bus driver, said that imperialism also forces people to uproot themselves in search of a better life.

He told Socialist Worker, “I was born in Somalia and my family came to Britain when I was eight in 1993. We were fleeing the chaos after US troops came to Mogadishu.”

Awaale said starting a new life in a different country can be difficult. “It was hard at first,” he said. “I had to learn English and to adapt to this completely new place.

“I didn't do great at school. When I left I drifted about a bit and had a string of jobs that were short-term or



Strikers bond over a barbecue in Putney, south west London

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

# WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITED



**Finding well-paid work was almost impossible. Then my friends told me about London. I like all the different cultures and backgrounds here—the more the better.**

**Emilia from Hungary**

really poorly paid. Luckily I learned to drive, and then a mate suggested I have a go at getting a job on the buses.”

Awaale added, “I don't want to sound boastful, but I was a natural! It still took time to get used to the pace of London and the stress of the job.”

Conditions for bus drivers can be stressful—and bosses' relentless drive for profit makes things worse. But there are plus sides too.

As Emilia from Hungary put it, “I really do enjoy it. I like the people I meet and the fact that I help people out with their questions as part of my job every day.”

Emilia told Socialist Worker she saw no future for herself in Hungary because “finding well paid work was almost impossible”.

## Diversity

She was also attracted by London's diversity.

“I had friends who had already come to live in London,” she said. “They told me about how different life was—the size and all the different cultures and backgrounds. There is no comparison in Hungary.

“The more cultural difference the better I think. The more you can

experience and the more opportunities it presents.”

Awaale said that working with people from different countries creates a “good atmosphere”.

“In our garage there are people from all over the world,” he said. “I met my wife at work. She's from Ireland. Our child has an Irish name and a Somali name.

“People won't be worried about that in Hackney.”

He added that there is a culture of looking out for people that comes



**I've been cussed off and spat at while driving a bus. Bosses and racists look down at us and all they see is shit. But when we look up at them all we see is an arsehole.**

**Patrice from Jamaica**

from a feeling of “being part of a team of mates”.

“I try to help out the young drivers who are from Poland or somewhere like that,” he explained. “I try to remember how tough I found things at first here.”

But although many workers stick together, racism elsewhere makes life for migrants much harder.

“I have never faced racism in the garage,” Awaale said. “But it's different with the police. “I was attacked on a bus by some white thugs. I'm sure the police would have treated it differently if it had been a white driver attacked by black people.”

Patrice, who came to work in Britain from Jamaica in the mid 1990s, has had a similar experience. He told Socialist Worker, “I've been cussed off and spat at driving a bus. People say, ‘Go back to your own country,’ but this is my home now.”

## Problems

Patrice was eager to challenge the view that migrants cause economic problems. “People come to better their lives, to live and to work, and satisfy themselves with what little they have,” he said. “Immigrants don't lower wages—it's not our fault.”

The London bus dispute bears this out. Bosses are inflicting low pay, and are refusing to pay all workers the same wage for the same job. They have created a series of ranks and rates to try and divide workers—but it isn't working.

Patrice has no time for the bosses or racists. “They look down on us and all they see is shit, but when we look up at them all we see is an arsehole,” he said.

Alem rejected the racist view that migrants come to Britain to claim benefits. “We come here to work, for our family and for our children to go to school,” he said.

Gonzalo, a driver working for Abellio, agrees. “When I came to London 17 years ago I started out



**If they were doing things in my country that would create jobs and help us—such as building houses—nobody would want to come here. We come to work.**

**Alem from Eritrea**

working in restaurants,” he told Socialist Worker. “Now I've been driving buses for eight years, I should really have done something else by now.”

Gonzalo explained that he hadn't always planned to stay in Britain. “I came here with the purpose of working for about ten years and then building a house back home,” he said.

## Home

“But Portugal is not such a great place to be right now with the economic problems. I've got two children who go to school here, they are now six and four. Basically this is home for me now.”

Gonzalo was frustrated at migrants being blamed for austerity or low pay. Like other drivers, he said the bosses are to blame.

“This company has big offices set up in Poland and Lithuania,” he said. “They deliberately go there to recruit people and pay them a lower rate. It is the companies, not immigrants, who try and undercut wages.”

Gonzalo said the problems facing workers, migrant or otherwise, are the same. “We've had prices going up for so long then they start cutting wages,” he said.

“This is the biggest problem—not immigration.

“A lot of people coming here are living in very poor conditions. I've seen five or six guys living in one room, maybe paying £30 each a week in rent. That is no way to live.

“My rent is £1,200 a month, I've got my children. How can I afford to live on a starter rate of £9.30 an hour for eight years?”

Alem said the work of all bus drivers benefits ordinary people—and they should all be “treated equally”.

“We need our rights—the rights of the world's workers,” he said. “These companies are making millions from us all. They have to share it with the people.”

Some names have been changed



**The alternative is in the sort of revolutions that swept the region in 2011**



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7819 1170 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

### NORWICH

**Syriza, the Greek elections and the fight against austerity**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

### YORK

**A rebel's guide to Eleanor Marx**

Book launch with author  
Siobhan Brown  
Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St, YO10 4AH

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### BARNLEY

**50 years after his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X**

Thu 19 Feb, 7pm,  
YMCA, Blucher St,  
S70 1AP

### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

**Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation**

Thu 19 Feb, 7pm,  
Priory Rooms,  
Quaker Meeting House,  
40 Bull St, B4 6AF

### BRADFORD

**50 years after his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Equity Centre,  
Perkin House,  
82 Grattan Rd,  
BD1 2LU

### BRIGHTON

**Can the Green party offer a left alternative?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St, BN1 1AF

### BRISTOL: NORTH

**Isis and counter revolution—a Marxist analysis**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
The Canteen, 5th Floor,  
Hamilton House,  
80 Stokes Croft,  
BS1 3QY

### BRISTOL: SOUTH

**Why are there so few strikes?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
YHA, Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

### CAMBRIDGE

**The marketisation of education**

Thu 26 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Shanghai Family Restaurant,  
39 Burleigh St, CB1 1DG

### CARDIFF

**Universities for sale—neoliberalism and education**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

### CHELMSFORD

**A guide to Marxist economics**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd,  
CM1 2QL

### CHESTERFIELD

**Winston Churchill—hero or villain?**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Market Halls,  
Market Place, S40 1PB

### COLCHESTER

**The marketisation of education**

Tues 17 Feb, 7.30pm,  
The Odd One Out,  
28 Mersea Rd,  
CO2 7ET

### COVENTRY

**Resisting the far right in Europe**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
West Indian Centre,  
159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

PROTEST ON SATURDAY 21 MARCH • [STANDUPTORACISM.ORG.UK](http://STANDUPTORACISM.ORG.UK)

# Stand up to Racism

### LONDON: HACKNEY

With Diane Abbott MP, Maz Saleem and Jo Cardwell  
Tue 3 Mar, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
Powerscroft Rd,  
E5 0PU  
Sponsored by Hackney NUT

### LONDON:

**WESTBOURNE PARK**

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Paddington Arts Centre,  
32 Woodfield Rd,  
W9 2BE

### MANCHESTER

Wed 25 Feb, 6.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

### SHEFFIELD

Tue 3 Mar, 7pm,  
Central United Reform Church,  
60 Norfolk St,  
S1 2JB

# Stand up to Racism— Stand up to Ukip



### LEEDS

Tue 17 Feb, 7pm,  
Leeds Civic Hall,  
Calverley St,  
LS1 1UR

### DERBY

**Syriza, the Greek elections and the fight against austerity**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Govanhill Baths,  
99 Calder St,  
G42 7RA

### DONCASTER

**The Holocaust—what are the lessons for socialists?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Women's Centre,  
21 Cleveland St, DN1 3EH

### DUNDEE

**Can we stop climate change?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary Action,  
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

### EDINBURGH

**Is the British economy recovering?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL

### ESSEX

**The bloody history of British imperialism**

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

### EXETER

**Isis and counter revolution—a Marxist analysis**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
New Horizon Cafe,  
47 Longbrook St, EX4 6AW

### GLASGOW: NORTH

**Isis and counter revolution—a Marxist analysis**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
O'Neill's in Merchant Square,  
71 Albion St,  
G1 1NY

### GLASGOW: SOUTH

**After Rotherham—what are the causes of sexual abuse?**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Govanhill Baths,  
99 Calder St,  
G42 7RA

### HARLOW

**Have women achieved equality?**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
1 Church Leys,  
CM18 6BX

### HUDDERSFIELD

**Isis and counter revolution—a Marxist analysis**

Wed 18 Feb, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade  
(near both train and bus stations), HD1 5JP

### IPSWICH

**Can socialism come through parliament?**

Tues 3 Mar, 7pm,  
Labour Club,  
33-35 Silent St,  
IP1 1TF

### KIRKCALDY

**Syriza, the Greek elections and the fight against austerity**

Mon 9 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Betty Nicol's Pub,  
297 High St,  
KY1 1JL

### LANCASTER

**Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation**

Thu 19 Feb, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House  
Meeting House Lane,  
LA1 1TX

### LIVERPOOL

**Can there ever be a revolution in Britain?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Brink Cafe,  
21 Parr St (near  
Concert Square),  
L1 4JN

### LONDON: BRENT & HARROW

**The politics of food**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
The Peppercot Centre,  
1a Thorpe Close,  
Ladbroke Grove (very  
close to the station),  
W10 5XL

### LONDON: BRIXTON

**How radical are the Greens?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
2b Saltoun Rd (near  
Effra Rd, facing Windrush  
Square), SW2 1EP

### LONDON: EALING

**Immigration—the myths used to divide us**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
W3 Gallery,  
185 High St, Acton,  
W3 9DJ

### LONDON: HACKNEY

**Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner  
Lower Clapton Rd),  
E5 0PU

### LONDON: HORNSEY AND WOOD GREEN

**How radical are the Greens?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.45pm,  
West Indian Cultural  
Centre, 9 Clarendon Rd,  
Haringey, N8 0DD

### LONDON: KINGSTON

**The housing crisis—why the system can't provide decent homes for all**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Kingston Quaker Centre,  
Fairfield East, KT1 2PT

### LONDON: LEWISHAM

**50 years after his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X**

Wed 25 Feb, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community  
and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd (near  
Greenwich main line and  
DLR station), SE10 8JA

### LONDON: NEWHAM

**What is class and why does it matter?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove (next to  
Morrisons car park), E15 1HP

### LONDON: SOUTHWARK

**Syriza and the fight against austerity in Greece**

Thu 19 Feb, 7pm  
Snug Room, The Grand Union,  
26 Camberwell Grove (off  
Camberwell Church St),  
SE5 8RE

### LONDON: TOTTENHAM

**Why capitalism is hard to digest—the politics of food**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Kitabevi Cafe,  
410 Tottenham High Rd,  
N17 9JB

### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

**Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Oxford House, Derbyshire St  
(opp Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),  
E2 6HG

### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

**Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Quaker Meeting House,  
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),  
E17 4QU

### MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

**How capitalism underdeveloped Africa**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Proof bar, 30 Manchester Rd,  
M21 9PH

### MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

**The crisis in the Middle East—can the Arab Spring return?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Swad Cafe,  
608 Stockport Rd (next to  
Immigration Law Centre),  
Longsight, M13 0RQ

### MEDWAY

**Rich versus poor—the British economy today**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Conference Room, The  
Nucleus Arts Centre,  
272 High St, Chatham,  
ME4 4BP

### NEWPORT

**After the Charlie Hebdo shootings in France—religion, free speech and racism**

Tue 17 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Emlyn Room 1,  
Newport Centre,  
1 Kingsway, NP20 1UH

### NOTTINGHAM

**Ferguson and civil liberties—do the police have a licence to kill?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
International  
Community Centre,  
61b Mansfield Rd, NG1 3FN

### OXFORD

**Ukip—the ugly face of politics**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Restore, Manzil Way (off  
Cowley Rd), OX4 1YH

### ROTHERHAM

**Is revolution possible?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7pm,  
Bridge Inn, Greasbrough Rd  
(near bus and train  
stations), S60 1RB

### SHEFFIELD

**A rebel's guide to Eleanor Marx**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Central United  
Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible  
Theatre), S1 2JB

### SOUTHAMPTON

**Syriza, the Greek elections and the fight against austerity**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
High Street Cafe,  
153 High St, SO14 2BT

### SWANSEA

**Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation**

Thu 19 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Brynmill Community Centre,  
St Albans Rd, SA2 0BP

### WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

**How radical are the Greens?**

Wed 18 Feb, 7.30pm,  
Grain Store, King St,  
WV1 1ST

## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

### DORCHESTER

**After the Charlie Hebdo shootings in France—religion, racism and free speech**

Sat 14 Feb, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club (opposite  
County Hall), Colliton Park,  
DT1 1XJ.  
Organised by Dorset Socialists

### LONDON

**End 13 years of torture and abuse**

March and rally for Shaker  
Aamer—close Guantanamo  
Sat 14 Feb, 12pm,  
Parliament Square,

March to Downing Street  
Called by Save Shaker Aamer

**The Three Degrees—the Men Who Changed British Football Forever**

Book launch with author Paul  
Rees. Story of the 1978-  
79 season when West Brom  
became the first British  
football team to field three  
black players—Cyrille Regis,  
Laurie Cunningham and  
Brendon Batson.

Mon 16 Feb, 6.30pm,  
Bookmarks Bookshop,  
1 Bloomsbury St, WC1B 3QE.

[bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)

**Syriza and socialist strategy**

with Stathis Kouvelakis,  
Syriza Central Committee,  
and Alex Callinicos, editor  
of International Socialism

Wed 25 Feb, 7pm,  
Peel Centre, Percy Circus,  
King's Cross, WC1X 9EY

Hosted by International  
Socialism. Visit: [isj.org.uk](http://isj.org.uk)

**NATIONAL**



# Rubens' imposing art couldn't dazzle Europe's Reformation

The Royal Academy is hosting an exhibition on Peter Paul Rubens. His art celebrated wealth and power in the face of Reformation, argues **Noel Halifax**

**THE ROYAL Academy's new exhibition on Peter Paul Rubens has split reviewers.**

In his BBC2 film *Flesh of Inspiration*, Waldemar Januszczak hailed Rubens as the greatest artist of his generation—if not ever—and one who was both misunderstood and underrated.

Meanwhile, Guardian newspaper art critic Jonathan Jones lampooned the exhibition, writing that Rubens was no more than an upmarket room decorator.

Rubens lived in a disputed area of Europe, now called the Netherlands and Belgium, which was in the centre of a great political conflict.

The Eighty Years War for Dutch independence from the Spanish Empire raged his whole life.

It was part of a great political conflict that pitted the Protestant "Reformation" in the north against the Catholic "Counter Reformation" in the south.

## Rising

This was a product of the rising merchant and capitalist interests, and the despotic forces who opposed them.

Rubens was the epitome of art of the "Counter Reformation".

His art was a must-have, and was hugely successful. Every despot and reactionary institution, such as the Jesuits, sought his art to decorate their palaces.

Rubens' art is vast in both size and quantity, and is literally gross. It was churned out by a large army of assistants, the likes of which was not seen again until the rise of Andy Warhol's "Factory" art in the 1960s.

Yet Rubens was not just a painter



**PETER PAUL Rubens, The Tiger Hunt (1616). It was commissioned by Bavarian ruler Maximilian I to decorate the old Schleissheim Palace**

or manager of a large studio. He was also one of the richest men, a friend of rulers and a diplomat serving the Spanish crown.

Januszczak argues in his film that Rubens was the Henry Kissinger of his day, strangely thinking this is a compliment.

Many artists both then and now

work for reactionary clients, but still produce great works of art.

While Rubens was churning out the huge pictures of gods and mythic battles, Caravaggio was producing some of his greatest works for similarly reactionary clients.

But Caravaggio's work manages to transcend this, with its suffering

and its joy. In contrast, there's nothing to contemplate and empathise with Rubens' work—it's meant to overwhelm.

In front of Rubens you feel either small and insignificant—or powerful to be able to own such a large and expensive thing.

There is little emotional depth in a Rubens. It's all surface—a vast hyperactive surface.

The art of the Puritan north was of portraits, domestic scenes or realistic landscapes.

## Excess

It was restrained and precise, usually small in scale. But Rubens' work depicted wild scenes of excess, with the canvasses exuding wealth and abundance.

But they are not just meaningless, pretty pictures—all serve a political point. In a time of war and famine, his pictures portray classical myths with mountains of naked flesh, battle scenes as ornaments, orgies of gods and goddesses all to provide a backdrop in a palace.

In England he painted such a scene for king Charles I in the Great Banqueting Hall of Westminster. The king was to be executed outside it after the English Revolution.

Rubens' aim was to make the viewer appreciate the wealth and power of their rulers, and to portray the divine right of kings.

Rubens and His Legacy  
Royal Academy of Arts,  
London W1J 0BD  
Until 10 April  
Tickets from £15, free for under 16s  
royalacademy.org.uk

# How destruction and depression created the Manics

## FILM

### NO MANIFESTO

November Films  
Out now on DVD and in selected cinemas

**NO MANIFESTO** follows the career of rock band the Manic Street Preachers. It covers from the time that they met in school in South Wales to the release of 2009 album *Journal for Plague Lovers*.

They describe the influence of punk bands such as The Clash on their early sound, as well as the impact of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

It felt as if everything

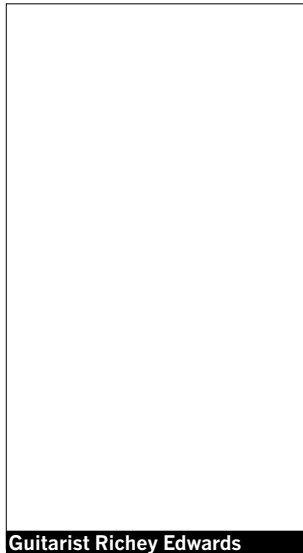
around them was being systematically destroyed, frontman James Dean Bradfield explained.

The film includes rare footage of one of their first gigs in 1986. The crowd started throwing beer cans and chanting, "You're worse than Swansea City."

But as the band gained attention guitarist Richey Edwards' health started to deteriorate. He became anorexic, drank heavily and was hospitalised with depression.

This influenced the turn towards the darker, more ambiguous lyrics of third album *The Holy Bible*.

On 1 February 1995



Guitarist Richey Edwards

Richey left his hotel room and was never seen again.

Fans still speculate about whether he is alive somewhere.

The Manics re-emerged as a three-piece band. They became one of the most successful acts of the 1990s, winning the Brit Awards.

But their politicised lyrics mean they still sit uneasily alongside other rock bands of the same era, such as Oasis or The Verve.

Probably as many fans read the literary quotes on the backs of their albums and picked up a book as have picked up a guitar.

The film includes lots

of interviews with fans. It includes the ones who think the Manics are the best band in the world, but also at least one who hated them until they went mainstream.

The film doesn't just portray them at their glamorous best on stage.

It also devotes a lot of time to showing the remaining members' private lives and the way they work together in the studio.

But it is a welcome addition to the greatest hits collection and the live recordings already available.

**Camilla Royle**

## MUSIC

### SHADOWS IN THE NIGHT

Bob Dylan  
Colombia  
Out now

FOR HIS 36th studio album, Bob Dylan has recorded a compilation of seemingly unlikely songs.

All the tracks on the album were written or recorded by Frank Sinatra.

The album begins with a rendition of I'm a Fool to Want You, and also includes an interesting version of Stay With Me.

Dylan's rendition is both minimalist and haunting. The steel guitar provides a soothing backdrop to a gentle electric guitar.

His soft vocals are also surprising. It's certainly not the rasping sound of the likes of 1964 Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll.

Its soft and tonal qualities

### Bob Dylan's new album

hark back to an even earlier period in his career.

It manages a hard ask, successfully blending Dylan's sound with the songs of Frank Sinatra.

Shadows in the Night is an unexpected but pleasant surprise.

**Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

## TOP 5 BOOKS

**Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop**

- Pride, Politics and Protest**  
Laura Miles
- The Ghetto Fights—Warsaw, 1943-45**  
Marek Edelman
- The Muslims are Coming: Islamophobia, Extremism, and the War on Terror**  
Arun Kundnani
- A Rebel's Guide to Trotsky**  
Esme Choonara
- A Rebel's Guide to Eleanor Marx**  
Siobhan Brown

Phone 020 7637 1848  
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk  
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE



**T**HE NEW drama series *Indian Summers* looks at the decline of British rule in India through the eyes of the colonialists and Indians.

Creator Alan Rutman said, “There’s a generation that’s dying out now for whom empire was a huge part of their lives, so I wanted to ask the question, what did we think we were doing out there?”

Whatever they thought they were doing, Britain’s rulers carved out an empire to generate wealth for themselves.

British rule in India began with the East India Company—that effectively acted as an agent of British state.

It had its own private army, and had effective control of India by the end of the 18th century.

It generated huge revenues for Britain by levying oppressive land taxes, and controlled trade out of India. At the same time it transformed India into a market for British exports.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, manufacturing in India was more advanced than that in Europe. But now the Indian economy served only one purpose—enriching the British ruling class. The flourishing textile industry in Bengal was destroyed.

So while Britain profited, the Indian poor suffered from frequent famines.

### Horrific

The first of these was in 1770, but they continued until the horrific Bengal famine of 1943, which killed up to five million people.

The cause was not lack of food. Food production was higher in 1943 than it had been two years earlier.

But as the Second World War progressed the British state had requisitioned food stocks for the British army.

And British prime minister Winston Churchill refused to send ships with food to India.

This undermines any notion that the Empire played a progressive role.

The revolutionary Karl Marx was referring to British rule in India when he wrote in 1853, that only after a socialist revolution “will human progress cease to resemble that hideous, pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.”

British domination relied heavily on racism, brutality and torture.

British colonialists routinely racially abused and beat their Indian servants.

And methods of torture that were used to enforce taxation included searing with hot irons, rubbing chillies into the eyes and genitals and suspension from tree branches. This



# BRITAIN'S CRIMES IN INDIA

As a new television drama looks at British rule in India, Nick Clark looks at the exploitation, famines and massacres that were the brutal reality of the Empire



Sepoy soldier, 1857

type of abuse remained right up until independence in 1947. But there was also resistance.

In 1857, Indian soldiers, known as Sepoy, in the East India Company’s Bengal Army launched a mutiny that developed into a national uprising against British rule.

The rebellion spread across northern and central India. It represented a huge challenge to the empire. But the British managed to regain control with a barbaric wave of repression.

“Sepoy launched a mutiny that developed into a national uprising

They recaptured rebel-held territory by shelling cities, looting, rape and the slaughter of thousands.

Eyewitness Lieutenant Charles Griffiths wrote that after the recapture of Delhi there were dead bodies “in almost every street, rotting in the burning sun.”

British soldiers were ordered to take no prisoners. Some captured rebels were hanged from trees, while others were tied to the mouths of cannon and blown

to pieces. But, the company’s rule ended and Britain took direct control in a regime that became known as the British Raj.

The history of the British Empire is characterised by similar waves of resistance and repression.

For example, in 1919 around 20,000 people gathered in Jallianwala Bagh gardens in the centre of Amritsar to protest against British rule.

The protesters were motivated by anger at higher taxes that had been imposed by the British rulers to pay for the First World War.

They were inspired by the Russian revolution in 1917, and the German revolution which had ended the war.

The protest was also an act of defiance against new oppressive laws that allowed the government to imprison Indians without any trial or evidence.

In response, around 90 British soldiers marched into the gardens and fired into the densest part of the crowd, killing more than 1,000 people.

Much of the resistance was organised by the Indian National Congress—a national liberation movement led by Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi.

In many ways, Gandhi and the Congress represented heroic resistance to the Empire. Gandhi was imprisoned several times for his role in organising mass civil disobedience.

He understood that organising effective resistance meant building a mass movement with a social base in the working class and the rural poor.

But the leadership of the Congress, including Gandhi, came from India’s middle class. For them, liberation meant replacing the British with an Indian ruling class.

So while they understood the need for mass organisation, they were also careful not to let it develop into a revolutionary movement that could threaten their own interests.

**G**ANDHI’S famous commitment to non-violence helped him to contain resistance in this way.

This tendency to hold back the resistance allowed the British to implement a “divide and rule” strategy.

Rebels in 1857 had united across religious divides. From then on the British did everything in their power to stop this happening again.

One measure they took was to introduce separate electorates for Muslims and Hindus, transforming religious differences into political divisions.

They also encouraged the growth of organisations such as the Muslim League, which sought to organise Muslims separately from the rest of the Indian population.

The Congress’s campaigns, which organised Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs together,

could have undercut this. But the Congress leadership held the struggle in check and it was never able to fully develop.

Nevertheless, Britain’s hold on India was weakening. One of the biggest challenges to the empire came with the Quit India movement in 1942.

Quit India was to be a huge campaign of mass civil disobedience. The aim was to break the Empire’s grip not just in India, but also Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq.

**T**HERE WERE some significant strikes. Some 30,000 workers at the iron and steel works in Jamshedpur struck for 13 days. And in Ahmedabad some 100,000 textile workers struck for almost four months.

In the countryside militant crowds burned police outposts, government buildings, post offices and railway stations.

In some areas, the British were forced out entirely, and revolutionary regional governments were declared.

It took 30,000 British troops to crush the movement with shootings, house burnings and the arrest of more than 90,000 people.

At the height of the movement the Governor General of India, Victor Hope, told then prime minister Winston Churchill that he was dealing with “by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857”.

It was becoming clear that the days of British rule in India were numbered. Britain’s ability to keep control of its empire had been seriously weakened by the Second World War.

It was the rebellion of 1946 that finally kicked them out.

The rebellion began when sailors in the Royal Indian Navy mutinied in response to the racism of their British commanders.

A general strike was organised in Bombay (now Mumbai) in support of the mutineers, and barricades were erected in many working class areas.

Britain was forced to begin negotiating plans for its exit with Congress. But those plans involved dividing India up into two separate states based on religion—India and Pakistan.

As the negotiations went on, the divisions sown by the British divide and rule strategy

Mughal India was rich before the British arrived (top). Leftist artist Chittaprosad Bhattacharya reminded people that divisions remained after they were forced out (above)



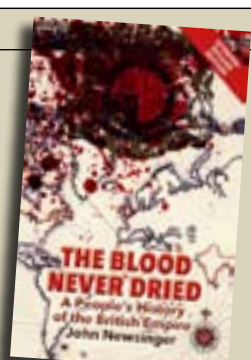
Gandhi was worried by the power of workers

## READ MORE

● **India—Imperialism, Partition and Resistance** by Sam Ashman, International Socialism 77 bit.ly/1xALQm9  
● **The Blood Never Dried** by John Newsinger (£13.99)  
● **Britain’s Empire—Resistance, Repression and Revolt** by Richard Gott (£14.99)

● **Late Victorian Holocausts** by Mike Davis (£14.99)

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



## Let’s finish the fight that Stonewall kicked off

Ellie May looks at how the Stonewall Riots marked the birth of the LGBT liberation movement—and the lessons for today

THE STONEWALL Riots of 1969 heralded the birth of the fight for LGBT liberation in the US and Britain.

There had been successful protests before, such as Compton’s Cafeteria Riot in San Francisco in 1966.

But Stonewall was the watershed and kick-started a mass movement.

The Stonewall Inn in New York’s Greenwich Village was a well known bar where gay and trans people could meet away from public condemnation.

They were predominantly black and Latino working class, often in low paid jobs or sex work.

At that time, gay people were treated as “deviants”, and forced to live in secrecy and shame.

Those who refused could lose their job or be arrested and imprisoned.

So the police frequently raided bars such as the Stonewall Inn. But on 28 June 1969, young gay and trans people resisted the police alongside other patrons.

For three nights, gay people and their supporters fought the police with Molotov cocktails, bricks and bottles.

### Confrontation

But the riots had support. More and more gay people and left wingers joined the confrontation with the police.

In the late 1960s, there was an upsurge in people fighting back against war and oppression.

The Black Power and women’s liberation movements were emerging, alongside a powerful movement on the campuses against US imperialism in Vietnam.

Transgender activist Silvia Rivera was involved in Stonewall. She explained, “All of us were working for so many movements at the time. “Everyone was involved

### Marching with the Gay Liberation Front

## BACK STORY

**The Stonewall Riots of 1969 triggered the launch of the LGBT liberation movement**

● The riots were part of a bigger ferment in society

● The Gay Liberation Front was launched following the riots

● Many of its members built solidarity with the other movements

● But this “coalition of the oppressed” was not enough to win lasting liberation

in 1969, points to many of the differences the GLF had with previous gay rights organisations that aimed to be “respectable.”

He wrote, “We want to make ourselves clear—our first job is to free ourselves.

“If straight people of good will find it useful in understanding what liberation is about so much the better.”

### Revolution

This liberation would be won through revolution—but there was no agreement on what revolution actually meant.

The GLF was able to make gains because it linked up with other oppressed groups and the left.

When the Black Panther leader Huey Newton declared in 1971, “Homosexuals are not enemies of the people,” it was in part because of the solidarity from the GLF.

Wittman wrote, “Right now the bulk of the work has to be among ourselves. But we can’t change Amerika alone.”

However, the GLF’s alternative vision of a “coalition of the oppressed” is not enough to achieve lasting gains and preserve what has been won.

The retreat of the movements led to defeats and fragmentation. What underpinned this was the low level of clashes between US workers and bosses.

The Stonewall Riots were part of a bigger ferment in society. And its revolutionary ideas remain relevant today.

But they also show why it’s crucial to link the fight for liberation to workers’ struggle.

“The vision of a ‘coalition of the oppressed’ is not enough to win liberation



# Tory reforms 'damaged' the NHS

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

A NEW report by the Kings Fund health charity has damned the Tories' NHS reforms in England.

It slams the legacy of former Tory minister Andrew Lansley's Health and Social Care Act as "confusing" and "damaging".

And it describes the political debate about the NHS since then as "taken up with limiting the damage caused" by the Act.

But while the report recognises that there has been "greater marketisation of the NHS", it is dangerously complacent about privatisation.

The report argues that "claims of mass privatisation were and are exaggerated".

It says, "NHS providers continue to deliver the vast majority of care to NHS patients" and "there is little evidence that this will change any time soon".

## Pace

British Medical Journal research last year revealed how privatisation is gathering pace.

Private firms grabbed one in three contracts given out by clinical commissioning groups since the Act. NHS providers



Shadow health secretary Andy Burnham on a protest against the Health and Social Care Act

PICTURE: GMB NORTH WEST

## FIGURE IT OUT

**£490 million**  
worth of NHS contracts went to private bidders since 2013

**£286 million**  
went to Circle Healthcare alone

were granted £8.5 billion, while £690 million went to "third sector" organisations and £490 million to private bidders—a total value of £10 billion.

Private firms were most successful at winning those contracts awarded through "competitive tender".

The biggest winner was Circle Healthcare, which won two

contracts worth £285.9 million.

Circle is the disgraced company that ran Britain's first privatised hospital, Hinchingsbrooke in Cambridge, from 2007. It announced it was pulling out last month after it ran the hospital into the ground.

Private Finance Initiative schemes also lock the NHS into contracts with private contractors

for decades.

This is the thin end of the wedge that could prise open the NHS.

The Labour leadership seized on the King's Fund report, as it has made the NHS one of its key election issues.

But shadow health secretary Andy Burnham's "ten year plan" does not promise to get rid of privatisation. And his promised £2.5 billion more funding is nowhere near what's needed.

## Walkouts

But last year's health walkouts showed the real alternative—workers fighting back against austerity. While officially about pay, workers were also striking to defend the NHS.

Union leaders hoped to use last year's health walkouts to shape Labour's agenda.

But the pressure is on them to get behind Ed Miliband. They called off two planned walkouts.

The ballot on the proposed offer is set to finish at the end of February. If the deal is rejected, Unison has said that it will call another strike on 13 March.

Every trade unionist and campaigner should fight to reject the deal and get the strikes back on.

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# New anti-terror bill makes Muslims the enemy within

The Islamophobic Prevent Strategy, which demands that workers in the public sector spy on Muslims, is set to become law. **Ken Olende** explains what the counter-terrorism bill will mean

**IF THE** government's new counter-terrorism bill is passed workers in councils, schools, universities, prisons and the NHS will be legally required to act as spies.

They must report people-suspected of "radicalisation".

This is the Prevent Strategy—that the government has used for years against Muslims—which is now being written in to law.

Even nursery teachers and child minders will be expected to report the children they look after.

## Enforced

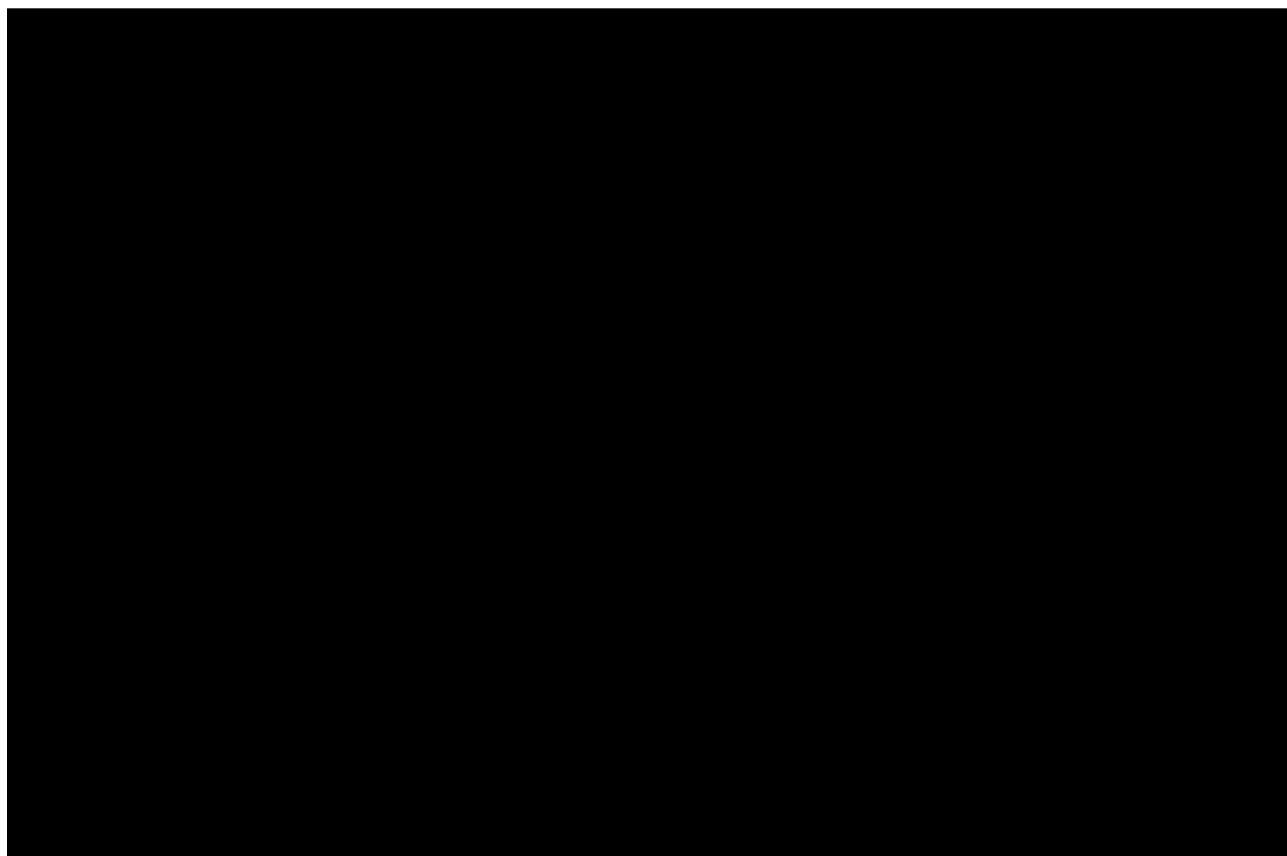
Where the government feels the new rules haven't been enforced strongly enough, the home secretary will have the right to take over and give "direction".

In practice it has been largely an attempt to push Muslims out of political activity. But it is an attack on civil liberties for everyone.

Workers need to organise to stop Muslims being picked off and driven out of politics.

Home secretary Theresa May likes to give the impression that Prevent targets people who are "being drawn into terrorism".

But in many towns—notably Bolton in 2010—Prevent money was used to stop young Muslims protesting when the English Defence



THE PREVENT Strategy will be used to police Muslims in schools who are against imperialism

League came to rampage through their areas.

May said in a speech last November that the policy will include universities having to introduce "extremist speaker policies".

This meant Prevent also

tried to stop a meeting featuring former Black Panther and Angola Three prisoner Robert King and former Guantanamo Bay prisoner Omar Deghayes.

Representatives approached the venue in Brixton, south London, in 2012 and

unsuccessfully tried to get it pulled.

This is a reminder that the radicalisation the Tories fear is not just about terrorism, but is linked to anything that opposes their interests.

Federation of Student

Islamic Societies vice president of student affairs Ibrahim Ali said, "Muslim students already feel like they are under increased surveillance. The measures outlined in this bill will only serve to reinforce those concerns".

## Defending Islamophobia

**THE BIASED** nature of the Prevent strategy can be seen in the people put in place to enforce it.

Ghaffar Hussain, was appointed as Prevent Officer for Newham in London in December. He was previously Managing Director of the Quilliam Foundation.

This is the think tank that is trotted out whenever the media needs someone to demand Muslims apologise for a terrorist attack.

In this role he tried to rehabilitate Tommy Robinson, former leader of the racist English Defence League (EDL), in 2013 saying, "I believed



Ghaffar Hussain

Tommy when he told me that he is not a racist and does not hate ordinary Muslims."

He ridiculed people who didn't believe Robinson hadn't noticed the EDL was a racist street gang as "the usual coterie of trendy wine bar types".

He dismissed the movement against the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as an alliance of Muslim

extremists and the far left in a movement that he calls "Westophobia".

Hussain was formerly an Associate Fellow of the right wing Henry Jackson society, whose patrons include neoconservative Richard Perle.

## 'Look out for extremists'

**A TEACHER** explained to Socialist Worker how the Prevent system is already being expanded in preparation for the new act.

"It casts a cloud of suspicion, particularly on Muslim members of staff.

"In effect people are being asked, 'Which side are you on?' If you raise the wars in the Middle East or Islamophobia you are "making excuses" for extremism.

"We were told to look out for extremists who set out to groom the vulnerable.

"They see it as comparable to child abuse.

"By this argument extremism is not a response to anything and it can't be understood in terms

of context.

"Our trainer was asked if the training session was to help us stop terrorists. 'No,' they said. 'This is the pre-terrorist phase.'

"So was it about identifying people on the basis of their ideas? 'No, people are allowed to have their ideas. We are worried about how they act on them.'

"They can't say if it is about actions or ideas. They try and give a liberal gloss, but it keeps flaking off.

"We can't stop the act being brought in now, but we can battle over how it is implemented.

"That will mean bringing together staff and students with wider forces such as local trade unions and mosques."

## What does the bill say?

**THE Counter Terrorism and Security Bill** is currently approaching its final stages in parliament. Its provisions contain:

**1** Police and UK Border Agency officials to be given the right to seize passports for up to 14 days.

**2** Temporary Exclusion Orders, which can make a British citizen effectively stateless for up to two years and stop them entering Britain.

The government says this is aimed at stopping people who have been radicalised and fought in wars, including in Syria.

**3** The maximum punishment for contravening internal exclusion orders to extend to ten years' imprisonment.

**4** Government to take more power to intercept communications.

**5** An ability to ban airlines from carrying some British passport holders.

It could also make them enforce a racist "no fly policy" on some nationalities.

**6** The Prevent Strategy to become a statutory requirement in places such as councils, schools, universities.

For more details see [socialistworker.co.uk/art/39517/Tory+anti+terror+bill+is+a+licence+for+Islamophobia](http://socialistworker.co.uk/art/39517/Tory+anti+terror+bill+is+a+licence+for+Islamophobia)



## IN BRIEF

**Cleaners' Bafta pay demo for living wage**

A GROUP of cleaners protested outside the Royal Opera House (ROH) in London during the Bafta film awards last Sunday.

The cleaners are demanding that Mitie, which has the contract for ROH, pay them the London Living Wage of £9.15 an hour.

The cleaners say Mitie had agreed to pay the Living Wage in November last year, but has not yet made the increase.

**M25 workers go for weekly walkouts**

MOTORWAY maintenance and incident support workers in the Unite union are set to strike for a pay rise on the London orbital M25 route.

A 24-hour walkout from midnight on Monday of next week is set to be the first of a series of weekly strikes, along with working to rule.

The 170 workers are employed by Connect Plus Services and contractors including Balfour Beatty, Atkins and Elgin.

They want a £30,000 basic wage, sick pay from day one and full union recognition.

**ITV action could hit election coverage**

BOSSSES AT ITV have agreed to further talks over pay with the NUJ, Bectu and Unite unions.

Talks will go ahead with mediators Acas in March.

Union members have overwhelmingly voted to reject a below-inflation pay increase of 2 percent.

The unions say they will ballot for strikes if bosses don't budge and action could be timed to affect ITV's coverage of the general election in May.

**Brighton bins get set to walk again**

REFUSE AND recycling workers in Brighton in the GMB union were set to walk out on Wednesday of this week.

It is part of a long-running pay dispute, and is in conjunction with a work to rule. The union has had a series of disputes with the local Green Party-controlled council.

The council continues to implement cuts, but local Green MP Caroline Lucas has previously sided with the workers.

**Strike ballot at East Sussex waste firm**

THE GMB union is set to ballot 154 refuse and recycling workers to strike in East Sussex.

The unions says Kier Environmental Services bosses refuse to take health and safety concerns seriously, and allege management bullying.

## ANTI-UKIP



PROTESTERS FROM Stand Up to Ukip and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (see page 7) trap Nigel Farage inside the racist Ukip party's Rotherham office last week. See [socialistworker.co.uk](http://socialistworker.co.uk) for full report

PICTURE: GEORGE ARTHUR

## FIREFIGHTERS

# Be 'more aggressive' to beat Tories' attacks

by ANNETTE MACKIN

IN A few months the Tories are set to force through plans for firefighters to face the sack or lose up to half their pension if they do not retain levels of fitness before retirement age.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members have consistently shown they are up for a fight.

But the stop-start nature of its strikes has dissipated momentum and given confidence to the Tories and fire bosses.

A FBU recall conference was taking place as Socialist Worker went to press.

It will be a critical moment in the pensions fight.

Some 30 firefighters attended an eve of conference rank and file meeting to discuss the way forward, and how workers can win.

North West FBU secretary

Les Skarratts argued workers must "come out of the conference with a unified call for longer and stronger industrial action".

The FBU executive council (EC) has put forward a statement outlining key tasks, including demanding Labour pledges to improve pensions and considering more strikes.

**Reality**

FBU London secretary Paul Embery said, "There's not a lot you can disagree with on the EC statement. The problem is a difference between the rhetoric and the reality."

He said "sporadic periods of strikes" were "not very appealing" and the union needed "a more aggressive" strategy.

There was also anger at the union's failure to adequately respond to the sacking of Buckinghamshire firefighter

and FBU EC member Ricky Matthews.

Les urged more of a fight to win Ricky's reinstatement saying, "The only people who sack EC members is us, through the ballot box."

Paul said "the drift and excessive caution" in the pensions campaign from the outset was the main problem. "Buckinghamshire was an example of where that excessive caution worked against us," he said.

"The EC are not just there to reflect opinions—they're there to lead. We should have thrown all our resources at that situation."

The London region was set to argue to escalate to national action if any brigade is locked out by fire bosses. The only way firefighters can get on the front foot and beat the Tories is through harder-hitting strikes.

## DEFENCE SUPPORT GROUP

## Tank workers vote on deal

by DAVE SEWELL

DEFENCE SUPPORT Group (DSG) workers in the Unite union were voting on a new pay offer as Socialist Worker went to press.

They repair and maintain tanks and military equipment for the Ministry of Defence.

Their ballot was set to close on Thursday of this week—with a majority expected to accept bosses' offer of a £1,250 lump sum in response to strikes last year.

Socialist Worker has argued to reject the offer.

It is less than the 8 percent consolidated pay rise the strike demanded.

And no deal should be signed without the reinstatement of Rod Thompson, the suspended

Unite convenor at DSG Bovington in Dorset.

A decision to pause strikes in January undermined the momentum the strikes were building.

Bosses gambled that the looming privatisation of DSG to new owners Babcock on 1 April would pressure workers to feel that it was too late.

But new strikes could still show them and Babcock that they are wrong.

For all its flaws the offer is far more than what workers were originally offered.

It shows the impact that the strikes had. And the dispute brought around 100 more workers into the union.

It will be important to build on this after privatisation—both to keep up the pay campaign under Babcock, and to fight any threats to jobs.

## CLIMATE CHANGE



It's time to act over climate change

## Cops' demo plan slammed

COPS IN London are demanding climate change protesters fork out thousands of pounds for private security on a march next month.

The Campaign Against Climate Change (CACC) has called a demonstration on Saturday 7 March saying it is Time To Act on climate change.

The Metropolitan Police have agreed a route for the demo—but said it won't close roads. Westminster council demands organisers come up with a "traffic management plan" for the march to go ahead.

Campaigners slammed the moves, which make protesting far more expensive, as an attack

on their democratic rights.

Ken Montague, CACC trade union group secretary, told Socialist Worker, "This is an outrageous infringement of the right to demonstrate which affects all of us, whatever the issue. We should bombard the Metropolitan Police and the government with protests and join the 7 March demo on mass."

The march is going ahead. CACC has called on supporters to volunteer as stewards.

●Time To Act national demo, Saturday 7 March. Assemble 12.30pm Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A timetoact2015.org

## HOUSING

## Protest over south London demolition

A PROTEST was set to take place outside Southwark council's cabinet meeting on Tuesday of this week, against plans to demolish south London's Aylesbury estate.

Council tenants, leaseholders and supporters want their homes refurbished, not demolished to make way for private developers.

Activists have been occupying a group of empty flats on the estate since last month's housing demonstration.



Tenants demand rent controls

On Thursday of last week police escorted council contractors into empty flats to "decommission" them.

They welded shut doors and smashed fixtures such

as sinks to render them uninhabitable.

But the occupation continued as Socialist Worker went to press.

The Aylesbury is one of around 50 council estates in London marked for demolition and private-led "redevelopment".

■AROUND 40 residents and supporters protested in Earl's Court, west London, last Saturday against plans to demolish the Gibbs Green and West Kensington estates.

## JUSTICE

## Police 'intelligence' quizzed

JUSTICE campaigners and activists attended a conference on police corruption, spying and racism in London last weekend.

Speakers included Stuart Lawrence, brother of Stephen Lawrence, and Janet Alder, sister of Christopher Alder.

The two-day conference examined how undercover police secretly gathered intelligence over two

decades on families fighting the police to get justice.

Helen Steel also spoke. She was deceived into having a two-year relationship with undercover officer John Dines.

The event was organised by Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Imran Khan and Partners solicitors, Monitoring Group and Tottenham Rights, and sponsored by Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance.



## FIGHTING THE CUTS

# Protests as councils get set for deepest cuts yet

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

**COUNCILS ACROSS** Britain are proposing deep new cuts at their annual budget-setting meetings—and anti-austerity protests are popping up in response.

Around 50 council workers protested during their lunch break last week against cuts proposed by the Scottish National Party-controlled Clackmannanshire Council in Alloa.

The workers protested outside the council headquarters over the impact of the cuts on the wages and conditions of council employees.

In Gateshead last Saturday people marched to save public sector jobs and services including libraries, leisure centres, older people's services and mental health services.

Gateshead Council, controlled by Labour, is ramming through £46 million cuts over the next two years.

Campaigners in Milton Keynes were set to stage a protest against the council's £22 million service cuts on Wednesday of next week from 6pm.

## Closure

The town's Citizens Advice Bureau now faces closure after earlier cuts outsourced its statutory duty to help people.

A homeless shelter is also being slashed.

Following the successful launch of a coalition to defend Glasgow's care services, activists have called for a protest at a council budget meeting on Thursday of next week.



**AROUND 400 people joined a protest and mass read-in outside Cardiff central library last Saturday against funding cuts that could mean the closure of seven libraries. It was one of a number of events called to mark National Libraries Day. In Birmingham TUSC election candidates Robert Punton and Alistair Wingate joined Unison union members and others to protest outside Birmingham's central library**

PICTURE: ADAM JOHANNES ON TWITTER

The impact of the Labour-run council's service closures and cuts for people with mental health problems, learning disabilities and the elderly has provoked outrage.

The Unison union plans a lobby of North Somerset Council's budget meeting next week over 18 job cuts, outsourcing 120 staff to a private

contractor and a reduction in overtime pay. The council also plans to outsource 52 Home Start care workers next year.

Leeds City Council is "at the brink of financial meltdown" as it weathers "near-impossible" cuts to its spending, its leader has warned.

Campaigners say ordinary people

## LABOUR

### 'Smart' council rallies against its own cuts

MANCHESTER'S LABOUR council launched an unusual protest against the cuts last week.

About 100 of its supporters gathered outside the town hall on Tuesday to show their outrage over the cuts.

Others were there to protest against the use of contractor G4S.

Speaker after speaker denounced the effects of the cuts on public services in Manchester.

Then in a "Hong Kong style" "smart rally", they got out their phones to condemn the cuts in a collective tweet to Tory David Cameron.

But they avoided the word "austerity". They opposed Tory cuts, not cuts in principle.

And they are currently preparing to slash £59 million.

This is Labour in action—tweets in opposition, cuts in practice.

**Ron Senchak**

will bear the brunt of a £45.4 million cut to the council's budget. Leeds trades council has called a protest on Wednesday 25 February from 12 noon.



## What's your story?

Email with your ideas reports@socialistworker.co.uk

## Anti-fascist protests

>>>continued from page 20

a march by some 600 English Defence League (EDL) supporters.

Cops arrested around 30 people—most of them anti-fascists.

The EDL called their national demonstration to try and whip up Islamophobia over the building of a mosque in the town.

Anti-racists from Birmingham, Telford, Wolverhampton and Coventry came to a counter-rally called by Dudley UAF.

Delegations from the NUT, FBU, CWU, Unison and Unite unions also attended.

Shaz Islam, a student at Wolverhampton University, told Socialist Worker, "We have to come out and oppose them."

"They are much smaller than they have been in the past, but we cannot give them any room to grow."

Labour leader of Dudley Council Pete Lowe told the rally, "The EDL do not speak for the people of Dudley."

## Zombie

Cops arranged for local bar the Rock Zombie to open at 10am to accommodate the EDL. Management said they will donate money from the day's trading to a cancer charity.

The UAF protest was held near the Dudley Central Mosque as police marched the racists to their rally in Coronation Gardens some streets away.

The mosque backed the counter-protest and arranged a social for anti-fascists to attend.

Imam Hashmi said, "We are living and working together in Dudley. Those people who are coming here want to divide us."

Weyman Bennett closed the rally. He said, "In the West Midlands people remember a man called Mohammed Saleem who was murdered by a Nazi."

"When they organise on the streets it ends in murder. Our saying is very simple—never again."

UAF national conference Saturday 21 February 9.30am–4pm, TUC Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1B 3LS. To book go to uaf.org.uk

## EDUCATION

### Conference blasts plan for 3,000 new academies

**AROUND 150** parents and teachers heard speakers condemn the Tories' plan for education at a conference last Saturday.

It was organised by the South East Region TUC and the Anti Academies Alliance.

NUT deputy general secretary Kevin Courtney laid into David Cameron's plan to create 3,000 more academies.

He pointed out that the Tory-dominated Education Select Committee found no evidence that academy conversion improves schools.

Linda Norrby from Swedish teachers' union Lärarförbundet exposed the disastrous free schools programme.

Professor Gus John outlined the continuing problem of institutional racism in education.

And in a Question Time session chaired by journalist Zoe Williams there was a lively debate on abolishing the hated schools watchdog Ofsted, teachers' workload (see right) and the weakness of the Labour Party's education spokesperson Tristram Hunt.

The central message was the need for parents, teachers and unions to unite and fight for a better education.

This fight will intensify after the election as a new round of cuts is imposed on our children. **Alasdair Smith**

## WORKLOAD

### What teachers need is action

NUT UNION branch secretaries were set to meet on Tuesday of this week to discuss a response to Tory education secretary Nicky Morgan's proposals on workload.

These proposals fall far short of what is needed to cut the intolerable workload that is driving record numbers of teachers from the job.

NUT union general secretary Christine Blower is right to say, "The government hasn't listened. This is not good enough."

If we want to cut workload, we have to fight.

We need to focus on wider questions too. Both the Tories and Labour plan budget cuts at a time of rising pupil numbers. This will add to workload.

Morgan also wants to keep the whole "accountability" regime of testing and the schools watchdog Ofsted—

which drives many workload pressures.

Ofsted must be scrapped, and discussions involving all in education begun about a proper system of accountability to replace it.

Even on the immediate workload symptoms we suffer, Morgan's report contains few concrete proposals. Measures that could cut workload are relegated to an appendix of suggestions that schools could "discuss".

In as many schools as possible we should organise to demand these changes, along with an end to lesson grading.

And we should demand the union calls official strikes with strike pay if heads refuse to implement them.

We need a national campaign and action to demand real changes.

**Paul McGarr**

## BARNSELY COLLEGE

### Strike wins support from other workers

**SUPPORT IS** building for the planned four-day strike at Barnsley College, set to take place from Monday 23 February.

The UCU union members are fighting attacks on their pay and conditions.

The Unite union's West Yorkshire warehouse branch and the Unison branch at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals each donated £250.

Unison branch secretary, Adrian O'Malley said, "Their support during our admin strike was fantastic. It's time to repay their solidarity."

South Yorkshire FBU made a donation of £100.

●Send messages of support to lee.short1975@gmail.com. Send donations and make cheques payable to Barnsley College UCU. c/o 43 Granville Street, Barnsley S75 2TQ



# MARCH TO STOP SCAPEGOATING

by KENOLENDE

**THE NEED** for a raging protest against racism was pushed home last week as David Cameron stepped up his scapegoating of migrants.

Cameron had already attacked health workers for supposedly not being able to speak English.

Yet some Tory MPs said he has been too soft. And a new pamphlet from the right wing Civitas think tank called for even tougher controls on migrants.

But many are angry at the attacks—and will join the Stand Up to Racism protests on Saturday 21 March in London, Glasgow and Cardiff.

Waida Forman is a Labour councillor in Harlow, Essex. She spoke to Socialist Worker about her worries over the Labour leadership pandering to racism in the coming election.

“They’re not attacking big corporations, but migrants,” she said. “Well, I’m a migrant. And I’m a nurse. I’ve never come across



ANTI-FASCISTS TAKE on Le Pen in Oxford (see story below)

PICTURE: KELVIN WILLIAMS

any clinical worker who can’t speak English.

“I don’t know why the leadership is doing this, but then they don’t talk to little people like me. I sometimes think they just see us as vote

fodder. But how am I supposed to knock on people’s doors and ask them to vote Labour?”

Waida said the 21 March protests can undercut mainstream racism. She is chair

of Harlow trades council, which is backing the London demonstration and sending a delegation.

“We can’t just sit by,” she said. “People tend to blame others when they don’t have

what they need. We need to pressure Labour MPs to change the party’s policies.

“If everyone had a home and job, they wouldn’t be blaming migrants.”

Several union branches

have passed motions supporting the protests, including from the Unite, NUT and UCU unions.

The Unison union’s health service group executive agreed to support the protests and pushed for delegations to attend.

It added that, given the rise of racist scapegoating of NHS staff, it would be good to have health workers in uniform on the demonstration.

Rashida Islam is raising the profile of the protests by pushing for anti-racist street art.

She told Socialist Worker, “This is a way of pushing the debate out to layers of society that might not otherwise be involved.”

Anyone interested in taking part should contact her at [streetartagainstracism@gmail.com](mailto:streetartagainstracism@gmail.com)

Stand Up to Racism and Fascism demonstrations on 21 March—London 12 noon, central London. Followed by a rally in Trafalgar Square, WC2N 5DN. Glasgow 11am, George Square, G2 1DU. Cardiff 11.30am, Clare Gardens, Riverside, CF11. Go to [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)

## ANTI-FASCISM

## Protesters say ‘never again’ as they take on Nazis in Oxford and Dudley

by ANNETTE MACKIN

**SOME 400** anti-fascists confronted Europe’s leading Nazi Marine Le Pen in Oxford on Thursday of last week.

The Oxford Union debating society had invited the fascist Front National (FN) leader to speak on “Western values”.

But anti-fascists scaled railings and blockaded the main entrance. This forced Le Pen to enter through a side entrance and delayed her appearance by over an hour.

Holocaust survivor Cleo



EDL supporters gather in Dudley

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Yvel joined the protest organised by Oxford Unite Against Fascism (UAF).

She was a child in France during the Nazi occupation and survived deportation after her family hid her.

Her father was murdered in Auschwitz concentration camp.

Cleo told Socialist Worker that it was important to oppose Le Pen’s attempts to appear as a respectable politician.

“She uses the tactics of Hitler—going everywhere and using rhetorical speeches to impress and deceive people,” said Cleo. “But Le Pen is a racist.

She is anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim, and she should not be trusted.”

Oxford University students joined the UAF protest along with trade unionists in the CWU, Unite, Unison, PCS, GMB and NASUWT unions.

Chants of “No pasaran” and “Le Pen—never again!” rang out.

Student Eleanor told Socialist Worker, “It’s really insensitive for the Oxford Union to invite her. She has to be challenged.”

Mohamed Abbasi from Oxford said, “I am here to protest against fascism and Islamophobia.

“Oxford is a

multicultural society—we don’t want her coming here trying to divide us.”

UAF joint secretary Weyman Bennett addressed the protest.

He said, “In Europe we see the dark clouds of people who wish to repeat the Holocaust. They sometimes have new targets, such as immigrants or Muslims.

“But we have to understand, if we allow them to grow then they will come for all of us.”

Two days after Le Pen’s visit, police locked down Dudley town centre to facilitate

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